

Identity Theft: Major Problem in Thompson County

The Marshall State Attorney General's office released figures showing that Thompson County merchants were defrauded of almost five million dollars in 2001. Worse, the report shows, individuals whose identity was "stolen" suffered even greater losses, as they were unable to substantiate claims that their credit card bills had been inflated by unauthorized charges for services and goods.

"Most of the time the victim does not realize that his credit has been used to run up bills for large amounts of merchandise," Attorney General Irene Krieger stated at a news conference. "The imposters manage to get passwords, social security numbers, mothers' maiden names, and other identity information. The victim may be facing thousands of dollars in credit card charges before realizing that someone is using their identity."

The Marshall City Chamber of Commerce has met with the Thompson County State's Attorney's office to demand "zero tolerance" in the prosecution of such offenses under the new Financial Identity Theft statute.

"Identity theft leads to staggering financial losses each year in this community, and we have to go after these predators with a vengeance," announced "Oz" Harter, president-elect of the Chamber.