



## *Informative & Protective Services*

*“Quick Blips” for May 2017*

*Memorial Day 2017*

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### Don't Get Burned By Travel Deals!



The Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises you to do your research **before** booking your next vacation.

Warning: watch out for fake rental listings that aren't actually available or don't exist at all.

BBB offers the following tips to ensure your planning your vacation with a trustworthy business:

- Research last minute travel deals but be cautious when booking an unknown travel website. Before booking make sure to read their cancellation and refund policy.
- Paying with a credit card gives you additional protection if something were to go wrong with the travel reservation.
- Verify reservations whether you are staying at a hotel, rental or resort call and confirm all arrangements. Get all details of your vacation in writing including contact information, travel itineraries and booking confirmation.
- Ask about “mandatory resort fees.” Call the hotel and find out before if a resort fee is included in the total cost.

Be alert for travel scams. Watch out for “you have won a trip” If you have won a “free vacation,” a legitimate business won't ask you to pay any upfront or processing fees.

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#### SCAM 1

**Another new scam** that shows up as a meme on social media prompts the viewer to list “the first ten concerts I have attended; one is a lie. Guess which one is the lie.” The scam is an effort to find out your first concert because banks often use your first concert as a security question. [NBC: *Nightly News with Lester Holt*. 5.1.2017]

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#### SCAM 2

**Another SCAM** originates on FB. A thief poses as one of your friends from high school with the intent to steal your money. He or she may ask if you have collected your stimulus money. All they need is access to your computer and \$850. [NBC: *Nightly News with Lester Holt*. 4.21.2017]

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#### SCAM 3

Around the US, **deed theft** has emerged as one of the most sophisticated and devastating frauds ever to menace homeowners. The thieves call it “foreclosure rescue.” After convincing the desperate to sign over their title, they then force them into homelessness or years of legal battles. Some opportunists cobble together fake documents on vacant properties; others transfer the home into their name or the name of a fake housing assistance business. [AP: rpt. in *Amarillo Globe-News*. P. A13. 4.13.2017.]

## USPO & Mail Theft



The USPO is considering a new way to stop thieves from stealing your mail. The USPO will inform you of your mail documents by sending you a photo of your daily mail. [NBC: *Nightly News with Lester Holt*. 4.14.2017]

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### Mumps

Texas has reached a 20-year high in mumps. Many of the affected did receive their MMR vaccinations, but it is only 80% effective. Look for swollen salivary glands on either side of the neck. [Ashley Lopez. KUT.org. Rpt. in *Amarillo Globe-News*. P. A3. 4.27.2017]

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### What's Healthy Now?

We all thought we knew that diet sodas are healthier alternatives to sugary drinks. Dr. John Torres reports on *Nightly News with Lester Holt* that diet sodas are now linked with strokes and dementia. Men and women who drink diet sodas are three times more likely to have the risk of a stroke or dementia. Always reach for the water!

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### Take Care at Summer Hotels

Hackers are now targeting hotels and stealing credit and debit card data. Although the central desk may have protection and encryption, it is not uncommon for data to be transported to other hotel points like parking, car rentals, restaurants, etc. which may not have encryption protection. [NBC: *Nightly News with Lester Holt*. 4.21.2017]

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### TIPS for Volunteering

From the Corp for National and Community Service

1. What have you waited your whole life to try? Why not attempt it now? See if an organization of interest to you offers training and professional development opportunities and volunteer to do something you never thought you would do but would love to try.
2. Look for opportunities that meet your skills and interests.
3. Check into doing short term, intensive volunteering experience. Many organizations are looking for qualified professionals to serve in volunteering experience, whether overseas or in the U.S.
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7. Look for opportunities that meet your skills and interests.
8. Help a young person find his or her personal gifts. Mentoring programs are a great way to do this.
9. Stay active and strong—volunteer! Studies show that a number of health benefits come from volunteering, including lower risk of heart disease and depression, and even longer life span.
10. Improve yourself through volunteering—you can use your service as an opportunity for self- improvement; for example, if you fear public speaking you may assist your local school or museum with educational programs to get past that.
11. Not sure where to start? The website: [www.getinvolved.gov](http://www.getinvolved.gov) will help you locate opportunities in your geographic area.

