



Contact: Kate Ennis  
(301) 580-6726  
[kate@enniscommunications.com](mailto:kate@enniscommunications.com)

## For Immediate Release

### **BEWARE FRAUD AND SCAMS THIS TAX SEASON, CAUTIONS IDENTITY THEFT ASSISTANCE CENTER**

*Take steps to ensure financial data, tax refunds, don't fall into the wrong hands*

**Washington, DC, March 5, 2008**—ITAC, the Identity Theft Assistance Center, urges taxpayers to stay vigilant this tax-filing season of email and phone scams and to take steps to protect personal financial information.

“It’s always good to have a healthy dose of skepticism when it comes sharing your personal financial data, especially at tax time,” said Anne Wallace, ITAC President. Wallace offers taxpayers the following tips to safeguard personal information:

- **Choose a tax preparer the same way you choose a doctor or a lawyer.** Your tax preparer has access to information that can be used to commit identity theft. The IRS advises taxpayers to avoid preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers, or who guarantee results or base fees on a percentage of the amount of the refund.
- **Beware email and telephone scams using the IRS name as a lure.** These scams include rebate phone call schemes, refund-related bogus emails, audit emails and change to tax law email scams.
- **Consider electronic filing and direct deposit.** You may want to switch to IRS e-file system, which is convenient and secure. You can avoid mail theft by automatically depositing your tax refund check.
- **Keep your antivirus software updated.** This is especially important if you keep taxpayer data on your computer, which leaves you vulnerable to online threats such as malware. Better yet, keep your tax documents in an encrypted file.
- **Be alert to other correspondence from the IRS.** If you receive a notice of taxes due on wages you did not earn, it could be an indication someone is fraudulently using your social security number for employment.

For additional advice on how to protect your information, visit the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

#### **About ITAC**

ITAC, the Identity Theft Assistance Center ([www.identitytheftassistance.org](http://www.identitytheftassistance.org)), is a nonprofit coalition of financial services companies united in our commitment to protect our customers from identity theft. As the leading provider of identity

assistance services, ITAC protects all consumers through partnerships with law enforcement, education and identity management services.

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