

COLUMBIA CITY NEWSLETTER

May 2010

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SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DEFENSIBLE SPACE

In the 1980's the term "defensible space" was coined to describe vegetation management practices aimed at reducing the wildfire threat to homes. This article responds to some of the commonly asked questions about defensible space.

What is defensible space? Defensible space is the area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and to provide an opportunity for firefighters to effectively defend the house. Sometimes, a defensible space is simply a homeowner's properly maintained backyard.

What is the relationship between vegetation and wildfire threat? Many people do not view the plants growing on their property as a threat. But in terms of wildfire, the vegetation adjacent to their homes can have considerable influence upon the survivability of their houses. All vegetation, including plants native to the area as well as ornamental plants, is potential wildfire fuel. If vegetation is properly modified and maintained, a wildfire can be slowed, the length of flames shortened, and the amount of heat reduced, all of which assist firefighters to defend the home against an oncoming wildfire.



The Fire Department is supposed to protect my house, so why bother with defensible space? Some individuals incorrectly assume that a fire engine will be parked in their driveway and firefighters will be actively defending their homes if a wildfire approaches. During a major wildfire, it is unlikely there will be enough firefighting resources available to defend every home. In these instances, firefighters will likely select homes they can most safely and effectively protect. Even with adequate resources, some wildfires may be so intense that there may be little firefighters can do to prevent a house from burning. The key is to reduce fire intensity as wildfire nears the house. This can be

accomplished by reducing the amount of flammable vegetation surrounding a home. Consequently, the most important person in protecting a house from wildfire is not a firefighter, but the property owner. And it's the action taken by the owner **before** the wildfire occurs (such as proper landscaping) that is most critical. *(This information was provided by the Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group.)*

PROPER EARTHQUAKE PROCEDURES

We recently received some information from Columbia County Emergency Management clarifying proper earthquake procedures. The Emergency Management has had a lot of questions lately about an e-mail going around from a supposed "expert" in earthquakes stating that folks should try to determine a "triangle of life" during an earthquake and lay flat outside of cars, among other things. Official rescue teams from the U.S. and other countries who have searched for trapped people in collapsed structures around the world, as well as emergency managers, researchers, and school safety advocates, all agree that this information is **FALSE**.



Following the information from this e-mail will likely cause death during an earthquake. The Southern California Earthquake Center at the University of Southern California has addressed this forwarded e-mail extensively and their holdings may be found at: <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/dropcoverholdon/>. They contend that, "Drop, cover and hold on" is the proper procedure to follow. It is impossible to know exactly how a building will collapse, if it even collapses, and the biggest threat in facilities in nations with modern building codes (such as our United States) is falling debris from the ceiling or from the windows and facade outside. We need to follow what the vast majority of geologists, emergency planners, and other professionals in this field have noted as proven science."

HARVARD PARK PATRONS

The Columbia City Parks Committee is seeking Harvard Park patrons that might be willing to help with landscape maintenance tasks.

Do you take your children to the park and watch them play in the playground? Would you be willing to spend a few moments pulling weeds while your children play?

Do you live near the park and enjoy mowing lawns? Would you be willing to periodically mow the park?

The Parks Committee hopes to find at least one key volunteer to "lead the way" for others to help maintain Harvard Park. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact City Hall.

"No matter how big and powerful government gets, and the many services it provides, it can never take the place of volunteers." Ronald Reagan

THE RIVERSIDE CLEANUP

Please join us for the riverside cleanup project. We are looking for volunteers to assist us with this project in Datis and Pixie Parks on Friday, June 4, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Volunteers will be removing blackberry bushes, morning glory, ivy, weeds and debris, as well as planting, painting, and sprucing up the parks as needed. If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact City Hall, or just show up at one of the parks. Please wear sturdy shoes and bring work gloves!

"Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another." Erma Bombeck

CODE ENFORCEMENT REMINDERS

Citizens should be aware of the following regulations with regard to parked vehicles along the roadway:

- ⇒ Must be legally parked in the direction of traffic.
- ⇒ May not be displayed for sale.
- ⇒ Must be currently licensed.
- ⇒ Must be operable.
- ⇒ May not be serviced or repaired except as necessitated by an emergency.

ROSE FESTIVAL FLEET WEEK



The official dates for the Rose Festival Fleet Week are Wednesday, June 2 through Sunday, June 6, 2010. For additional information check Rose Festival website at <http://www.rosefestival.org/events/fleet/>.

PLANNING COMMISSION NEWS

We want to sincerely thank Karen Ladd for serving on the City's Planning Commission. Karen was originally appointed to the Commission in November 2002 and served until her resignation in April 2010. She will be missed, and we greatly appreciate her past service!

Are you interested in serving on the Columbia City Planning Commission? Applicants must reside within the City or the City's Urban Growth Boundary. The term is for a period of four years, and the Commission meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Applications are available at the City Hall.

BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

The International Code Council (ICC) and International Code Council Foundation (ICCF) has expanded Building Safety Week into a month-long Building Safety Month

Commemorating a
30-year Legacy of Leadership



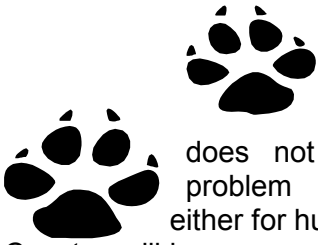
BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL FOUNDATION

MAY 2010

campaign to expand opportunities, and increase awareness about the critical importance of building and designing safe, sustainable and green structures in the United States and worldwide. Each week outlines different themes starting with Week One (May 1-8) is Energy & Green Building; Week Two (May 9-15) is Disaster Safety & Mitigation; Week Three (May 16-22) is Fire Safety & Awareness and Week Four (May 23-31) is Backyard Safety. More information about these building safety themes may be found at www.buildingsafetymonth.org.

COEXISTING WITH COYOTES



Coyotes are frequently spotted in Columbia City. Seeing a coyote cross a field, backyard, or road does not necessarily constitute a problem or dangerous situation, either for humans or domestic animals. Coyotes will be more active and more visible in late winter/early spring during their breeding season. Most coyotes are harmless; their goal is to eat more natural foods such as mice and rabbits.

However, coyotes are opportunistic. If coyotes see easy food – such as open garbage – and aren't afraid, they may take advantage. That puts them in direct line for a confrontation with pets.

Some tips on living near coyotes:

- Don't feed any wild animals such as raccoons or deer, which encourages coyotes as well. Garbage should be stored in secure containers. Do not put meat scraps in compost piles.
- Remove bird feeders and outside pet food containers. Coyotes will prey upon small mammals that are attracted to birdseed and pet food.
- Don't allow pets to run free and keep a watchful eye on them. Walk dogs on a leash, especially at night. Keep cats indoors at all times. Do not let pets out at night unless accompanied by a person. Don't leave cat or dog food outside.
- Provide secure shelters for poultry, rabbits, or other outside pets.
- Clear woodpiles, brush piles and other potential cover for coyotes. Secure garbage in areas where coyotes can't access it; keep yards clean of refuse and brush.
- Don't leave small children outside unattended.
- Reinforce the coyotes' natural fear of humans by turning on outside lights, making loud noises, throwing rocks and so forth. Be aggressive in your actions. Although the response may not be immediate, eventually the coyotes will flee.



THANK YOU

We'd like to extend a very special "thank you" to:

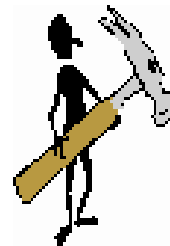
- ❖ Bernie Albertine, Karin Bates, Marian Calnon, Gloria Chinell, Phyllis Rowley and Vonnie Walker for helping with the utility billing and newsletters in March.
- ❖ Marian Calnon for flowerbed work at City Hall.
- ❖ Shelia Bauer, Sally Ann Marson, Rob Campbell, Stan Hopkins, Don Cross, the Columbia County Community Corrections crew, and the Columbia County Circuit Court Juvenile Department for their assistance with the Annual Spring Clean-Up Day.

"Throughout my life, I've seen the difference that volunteering efforts can make in people's lives. I know the personal value of service as a local volunteer." Jimmy Carter

HOUSING REHABILITATION LOANS AVAILABLE

Is your house in need of repairs? Low-income homeowners may be eligible for no-interest, deferred payment loans! The funds may be used to complete the following housing rehabilitation projects:

1. Update electrical, plumbing or sewer
2. Replace or update heat source
3. Replace roof, doors, windows
4. Structural repairs
5. Foundation repairs
6. Energy saving measures



In order to qualify, you must be a homeowner, meet income and property guidelines, and live in the dwelling to be repaired. Loan funds are limited! Please contact the Community Action Team, Inc., at (503) 397-1675 for additional information and/or loan applications.

💧 WATER CONSERVATION TIP 💧

When you wash dishes by hand, don't leave the water running. Use a sink or dish pan full of wash water and one of rinse water.



**POLICE ACTIVITY REPORT
March – April 2010**

See below for the department's activity during the most recent reporting period. Please feel free to contact me, or any of your outstanding police officers, with any feedback or further questions that you may have.

Stay safe, Chief Michael S. McGlothlin



Your police officers answered 471 calls for service during the past reporting period. These activities increased from 379 calls for service during the previous month. Although many of these calls were self-initiated by officers of this department, we have also summarized below both significant community policing and criminal investigations that we have conducted.

Community Policing Activity:

- Residential Security Checks: 240
- Area Patrols: 15
- Foot Patrols: 10
- Assist the Public: 22
- Civil Situations: 1
- Radio Calls: 98
- Welfare Checks: 2
- Animal Complaints: 4
- Assist Outside Agencies: 6
- Lost/Found Property: 2
- Nuisance Calls: 1

Criminal Activity:

- Domestic Disturbances: 1
- Suicide Threats: 1
- Burglary from Residence: 1
- Harassment: 1
- Fraud Investigations: 1
- Investigative Follow Up's: 18
- Suspicious Circumstances, People and Vehicles: 6
- Communicating Threats Calls: 1
- Traffic Complaints: 1
- Traffic Stops: 27
- Violation of Restraining Order: 1
- Juvenile Investigations: 3
- Sexual Assault Investigations: 2
- Criminal Mischief: 1

Calls of Interest:

1. Suspicious vehicle at Hwy 30 near "L" Street on 03/03/2010 – vehicle checked out OK.

2. Suspicious person and vehicle at Sixth Street and Penn Street on 03/03/2010 – person and vehicle checked out OK.
3. Suspicious person at Sixth Street near "A" Street on 03/18/2010 – person checked out OK.
4. Suspicious person in the 2900 block of Sixth Street on 03/19/2010 – person checked out OK.
5. Criminal mischief in the 2400 block of Sixth Street on 03/20/2010 – unknown person threw a rock and broke homeowner's window. No suspect identified – leads exhausted.
6. Suspicious person in the 2400 block of Sixth Street on 03/20/2010 – person checked out OK.
7. Suspicious circumstances in the 2300 block of Fifth Street on 03/22/2010 – call re-classified as an assist the public with assistance rendered.
8. Runaway child from the 3000 block of Sixth Street on 04/15/2010 – child found and returned to parental care.

PAVING PROJECT BEGINS ON SIXTH & "E"

The pavement restoration project on Sixth Street between Pacific and Franklin Streets, on Sixth Street between "A" and "H" Streets, and on "E" Street between Highway 30 and Sixth Street will begin in late May. This project is funded entirely by grant funds consisting of a \$94,000 grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and a \$25,000 grant from the 2010 Special City Allotment Program. Residents can expect intermittent lane closures or detours during the project.

LIBRARY NEWS



Save June 5 for our next book sale! We needed to fit another one in before the City Celebration, so that you can stock up on summer reading material! As always, we welcome donated books to help us stock both the library and the book sale. We will have setup Friday night, and the sale will be Saturday, June 5 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteers, put it on your calendar! We have such great help for setting up, we can get the best organized sale around ready to go in just two hours!

The Novel Quilters will be reading *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen. We will meet informally each month on the third Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Quilts based on *Water for Elephants* will be revealed in October. Bring what you are reading, and some handwork while we visit!

LIBRARY NEWS (continued)

Several books on the list from last month were donated to the library. We were so happy to see them! If you have read any of these recent best seller books, and would like to donate your copy to the library, we would really appreciate them:

- *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave
- *The Blind Side* by Michael Lewis
- *My Horizontal Life* by Chelsea Handler
- *Deception* by Jonathan Kellerman
- *Change Your Brain, Change Your Body* by Daniel G. Amen

New at the Library...

There is so much new lately! The St. Helens Book Shop donated four boxes of Advance Readers Copies, and most of those are available now. We have a great selection of 2009 and even some 2010 books! More than you can read! A few examples are:

Small Favor by Jim Butcher:

No one's tried to kill Harry Dresden for almost an entire year, and his life finally seems to be calming down. For once, the future looks fairly bright. But the past casts one...long shadow.

An old bargain has placed Harry in debt to Mab, monarch of the Winter Court of the Sidhe, the Queen of Air and Darkness - and she's calling in her marker. It's a small favor he can't refuse...one that will trap Harry Dresden between a nightmarish foe and an equally deadly ally, and one that will strain his skills - and loyalties - to their very limits.

It figures. Everything was going too well to last...

Tell Me Pretty Maiden by Rhys Bowen:

It's wintertime in New York, and for the first time since Irish immigrant Molly Murphy started her early-twentieth-century detective agency, she is completely snowed in with work. While she's very much in demand by some of Broadway's brightest stars and Fifth Avenue's richest families, Molly must admit that it's time for her to get some help. Her beau, the recently and wrongly suspended police captain Daniel Sullivan, would make an ideal associate. But before Molly and he can agree on the terms of his employment, they stumble upon a young woman lying unconscious in the middle of a snow-covered Central Park. When the woman wakes up, she is disorientated and has and lost her ability to speak. The authorities are about to pack

her off to an insane asylum—but Molly can't help but step in and take on yet another stormy case...

The Wrecker by Clive Cussler:

Set in 1907, the rousing second thriller to feature detective Isaac Bell (after *The Chase*) from bestseller Cussler and Scott pits Bell against "the Wrecker," who's been destroying trains and railroad facilities around the country for no apparent reason. These horrific incidents are wreaking havoc on the plans of Osgood Hennessy, the Southern Pacific Railroad's president, who's constructing the massive Cascade Canyon Bridge in Oregon. If the project isn't completed by winter, Hennessy's bankers will withdraw financing and his company will be destroyed. As in the first book, the purposefully stilted writing style takes a little getting used to, but there's plenty of excitement to be had in a world where massive, fire-breathing trains fly along at speeds of up to 120 mph. While the Wrecker's identity is revealed early on and there's never any doubt that Isaac will get his man, readers will find many thrills and much diabolical cleverness along the way.

Peter and the Secret of Rundoon by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson:

In this action-packed conclusion to the *Starcatchers* trilogy, Peter and Molly find themselves in the dangerous land of Rundoon, ruled by the evil King Zarboff, who takes great delight in watching his pet snake, Kundalini, consume anyone who displeases him. But that's just the start of the trouble facing our heroes, who once again find themselves pitted against the evil shadow creature, Lord Ombra, in a struggle to save themselves and Molly's father - not to mention the entire planet - from an unthinkable end. Meanwhile, back in Never Land, a tribal war is under way, and while Peter is off fighting to save the world, a young Mollusk princess has no choice but to join forces with sinister pirates to save her island from the vicious Scorpions.

Staffed Library Hours:

Monday & Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Wednesday 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Thursday 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Story Time: Mondays at 11 a.m.

Friends of the Library Meeting:

Monday, May 10 at 7 p.m.

Novel Quilters Meeting:

Wednesday May 19 at 6:30 p.m.

Mystery Book Group:

Wednesday, May 26 at 7 p.m.

Book Sale:

Saturday, June 5 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

<http://www.freewebs.com/cccomlibrary/index.htm>

MONTHLY MEETING AND EVENT CALENDAR - MAY 2010

May 5 th	6:00 p.m.	Budget Committee Meeting at the Community Hall
May 6 th	6:00 p.m.	Regular City Council Meeting at City Hall
May 10 th	7:00 p.m.	Friends of the Library Meeting at the Library
May 11 th	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting at City Hall – cancelled
May 13 th	7:00 p.m.	Municipal Court at City Hall
May 18 th	5:00 p.m.	Parks Committee Meeting at City Hall
May 20 th	7:30 p.m.	Regular City Council Meeting at City Hall
May 26 th	4:00 p.m.	Hazard Mitigation Meeting at City Hall
May 31 st	CLOSED	City Hall is closed on Memorial Day



QUILT RAFFLE

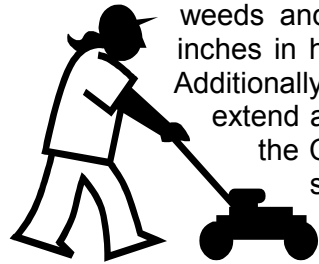


Purchase your raffle tickets now to win this beautiful quilt! All of the proceeds from this raffle will go to the Columbia City Community Library. Tickets are just \$1.00 each or \$5.00 for six. A total of 1,500 tickets are available for sale. The drawing will be held during the 2010 Columbia City Celebration on

Saturday, September 11, 2010, at 1 p.m. You can buy your tickets at City Hall or the Library. Come view the quilt currently at City Hall.

PLEASE KEEP THOSE GRASSES AND WEEDS CUT!

Between April 15th and September 30th each year, weeds and grass cannot exceed 10 inches in height within the City limits. Additionally, blackberry bushes cannot extend across property lines or into the City's right-of-way, including streets, alleys and sidewalks. Property owners or other persons in charge of the property must keep weeds, grass and other noxious growth, such as poison oak, cut and maintained to prevent them from becoming unsightly and a fire hazard, and to prevent them from maturing and going to seed. Violators can be cited into Municipal Court. Additionally, the City may abate the nuisance and lien the property for the costs. To report violations, please contact City Hall.



"TOGETHER WE PREPARE OREGON" GIVING BLOOD

The American Red Cross Pacific Northwest Regional Blood Services must collect at least 5,000 pints of blood each week to meet the needs of local patients. The organization is the sole supplier of blood and blood products to more than 80 hospitals in Oregon, Washington and southeast Alaska.

In addition to whole blood, the Red Cross collects platelets for patients undergoing special treatment. Platelets are one component of blood that aid in the clotting process.

Platelets prevent or stop bleeding and help treat patients with cancer, leukemia and other diseases. Since platelets can be stored for only five days, there is a constant need.



Eligible donors can give every 56 days. Blood is a cornerstone of medicine and critical to public health, but whole blood has a limited shelf life. The need for blood is constant.

Through the power of the Red Cross national system, blood can quickly be shipped from one area of the country to another – wherever it is needed most.

The American Red Cross encourages eligible donors to give blood regularly. Scheduling regular blood donations ensures that a safe and stable blood supply is available for Oregonians at all times. Blood donated before disaster strikes is critical to immediate needs during relief and recovery efforts. Visit www.nwblood.redcross.org for information about how to schedule a blood donation.

CITIZEN SURVEY

Columbia City provides a range of services to the community. We'd like to ask our citizens to please take a moment to let us know how we are doing.

Question 1: How long have you lived in Columbia City? _____

Question 2: On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is Poor and 10 is Excellent, how would you rate Columbia City as a place to live today? (circle one number)

Poor Excellent
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 3: What is one thing you particularly enjoy about living in Columbia City? _____

Question 4: What is one thing you'd change to make living in Columbia City more enjoyable? _____

Question 5: In the past year or so have you, or has anyone in your household:

A. Had a direct contact with a representative of the City Hall office?
Yes _____ No _____ (skip to Question 6)

If you answered yes to part 5A, please:

B. Indicate the nature of the contact: _____
and

C. Rate your satisfaction with the quality of service you received:

Not At All Satisfied Very Satisfied
1 2 3 4 5

Question 6: In the past year or so have you, or has anyone in your household:

A. Had a direct contact with a representative of the Police Department?
Yes _____ No _____ (skip to Question 7)

If you answered yes to part 6A, please:

B. Indicate the nature of the contact: _____
and

C. Rate your satisfaction with the quality of service you received:

Not At All Satisfied Very Satisfied
1 2 3 4 5

Question 7: In the past year or so have you, or has anyone in your household:

A. Had a direct contact with a representative of the Public Works Department?
Yes _____ No _____ (skip to Question 8)

If you answered yes to part 7A, please:

B. Indicate the nature of the contact: _____
and

C. Rate your satisfaction with the quality of service you received:

Not At All Satisfied Very Satisfied
1 2 3 4 5

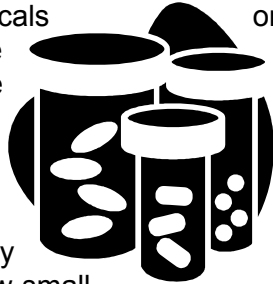
Question 8: What is your perception of the overall quality of services provided by the City of Columbia City? (circle one number).

Poor Excellent
1 2 3 4 5

Please return completed surveys to City Hall during the month of May. Thank you for your feedback!

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPOSAL

Many people either flush their medications down the toilet or pour it down the drain. This all seems OK, but many sewage treatment plants do not remove or treat pharmaceuticals or cosmetics from the waste stream. Essentially, these dissolved/diluted products end up in our rivers. Since drug turn-in events are rare, many citizens often ask, "How can I dispose of my outdated medications?" A few small steps can make an important difference in safeguarding lives and protecting the environment. Follow your medication prescriber's instructions and use all medications as instructed. If you do not use all of your prescribed or over-the-counter medication, you can take a few small steps to make a huge impact in safeguarding lives and protecting the environment by disposing of unused medicines properly:

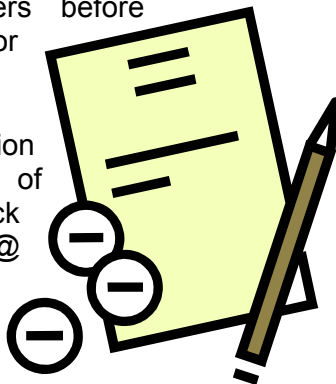


- DO NOT FLUSH unused medications and DO NOT POUR them down a sink or drain.
- Be proactive and dispose of unused medication in household trash.

When discarding unused medications, ensure you protect children and pets from potentially negative effects:

- Pour medication into a seal able plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it.
- Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets and children to eat) to the plastic bag.
- Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash.
- Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from all medication containers before recycling them or throwing them away.

For more information regarding disposal of pharmaceuticals, check out Smart Disposal @ www.smarxtdisposal.net.



TEN THINGS THE IRS WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT

1. If you receive a letter or notice from the IRS which leads you to believe someone may have fraudulently used your Social Security Number, respond immediately to the name and address or phone number printed on the IRS notice.
2. If you receive a letter from the IRS that indicates more than one tax return was filed for you, this may be a sign that your SSN was used fraudulently.
3. Another sign that you may be the target of identity theft is an IRS letter indicating you received wages from an employer unknown to you.
4. The IRS has a department that deals specifically with identity theft issues. The IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit is available if you have been in contact with the IRS about an identity theft issue and have not achieved a resolution.
5. You can contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit by calling the Identity Theft Hotline at 1 (800) 908-4490 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. local time.
6. The IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit is also available if you believe your identity may be at risk of being stolen due to a lost or stolen purse or wallet or due to questionable activity on your credit card or your credit report.
7. The IRS never initiates communication with taxpayers about their tax account through emails. If you receive e-mail or find a Web site you think is pretending to be the IRS, forward the e-mail or Web site URL to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov. Do not reply or click on any links.
8. The IRS has many more resources available to help inform taxpayers about identity theft on the IRS Web site at IRS.gov. On IRS.gov you can access information on how to report scams and bogus IRS Web sites. You can also visit the IRS Identity Theft Resource Page, which you can find by typing Identity Theft Resource Page in the search box on the IRS.gov home page.
9. The Federal Trade Commission is also available to assist taxpayers with identity theft issues. You can reach them by calling 1-877-ID-THEFT.
10. Visit OnGuardOnline.gov for protection tips from the federal government and the technology industry.