Press Release

ID Thieves Face New Obstacle: Merchants ID Theft Advisory Board to Help Stop ID Criminals by...

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PHOENIX , July 28 /PRNewswire/ -- An epidemic of ID Theft--nine million cases reported annually and 262 million ID records reported stolen since 2005 --is the driver of Merchants Information Solutions' creation of the U.S.'s first volunteer business government Board dedicated to stopping ID thieves by creating and delivering the latest and best prevention practices.

High level experts in ID Theft and Information Technology from the FBI, Avnet, GoDaddy.com, Merchants Information Solutions, a bank fraud specialist, cyber forensics specialist and a media crisis expert are among the founders of the Merchants ID Theft Advisory Board.

ID theft gangs are often months ahead of law enforcement with new tactics. From getting gang members hired at target companies and new hacking techniques to pretending to be legitimate vendors with the purpose of data access, ID thieves are creative and relentless. The Board plans to try and level the playing field by getting effective prevention knowledge and methods out rapidly and frequently.

"With hundreds of business clients who reduce risk by using our ID Theft recovery protection for millions of their employees and customers, we are very aware of the latest ID theft and data breach crimes and trends. It's not pretty and it's getting worse. We decided we could do something significant to help legitimate organizations protect themselves with this remarkable Board of very distinguished national and international experts," said Mark Pribish, Board Chair and VP of the ID Theft Practice at Merchants.

The Merchants ID Theft Advisory Board voted at its inaugural meeting to create and distribute free a sophisticated and up-to-the minute best practices guide in the prevention of ID theft and data breach events. The group's unique and high level expertise in matters related to data protection and breaches provides a formidable think tank of real world professionals.

Most data breach events occur through social engineering including current and former employees and vendors who are often part of criminal networks. Though organizations may have protections in place, the ever-evolving and sinister tactics by ID thieves require ongoing prevention updates. By comprising the Board of real-world savvy and very sophisticated specialists, the Merchants ID Theft Advisory Board is set to play a key role in offering the latest methods of stopping ID theft and the pain it causes.

Pribish, a national authority and speaker on ID theft prevention and recovery and Board co-chair Gregg Ostro, a media expert experienced in data breach crises researched extensively to find

the right mix of Board members. The result is a group of highly qualified specialists from leading organizations with a direct interest in minimizing the legal, financial and brand image impact of data breach events.

"This preeminent group that has been assembled to combat ID Theft through education and recommending best practices is nothing short of world class. My goals for this Board are to guide the discussion, help with information preparation and ensure the best tools of communication are created so we can empower organizations with effective prevention," Ostro, Advisory Board co-chair and CEO of GO Media Cos. said.

The all volunteer Merchants ID Theft Advisory Board includes: Kent Ailes, VP Risk Management, AZ Federal Credit Union; David Beauchamp, Partner, Bryan Cave, LLP; Michael Benoit, Partner, Hudson Cook, LLP; Paul Charles, International Entrepreneur & Principal, Charles & Associates, LLC; John Iannarelli, Supervisory Special Agent, FBI; Christine Jones, Chief Counsel, GoDaddy.com; Gregg Ostro, President & CEO, Go Media Cos.; Steve Phillips, Chief Information Officer, Avnet; Mike O'Shaughnessy, COO, Forensic Consulting Solutions, LLC; Scott Smith, President & Managing Director, NXG Strategies; Russ Johnson, President & CEO, Merchants Information Solutions, Inc.; Mark Pribish, VP & ID Theft Practice Leader, Merchants Information Solutions, Inc.

About Merchants Information Solutions: Founded in 1912, Merchants is a leading provider of low-cost identity theft protection and recovery solutions, helping to support the risk management objectives of financial institutions, associations, employer groups, and the automotive industry, by offering revenue opportunities through fee-based subscription services. Merchants also has a robust line of on-demand background screening solutions empowering pre-employment, tenant screening and behavioral physiological assessment clients to instantly assess candidates in minutes. For more information, visit *www.merchantsinfo.com* .

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