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CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO CHARGES HAMBURGER HAMLET SERVER IN CREDIT CARD SKIMMING ID THEFT SCHEME

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo today announced he has filed multiple criminal charges against a Los Angeles woman who stole credit card information from as many as 40 people while working as a waitress at a West Los Angeles Hamburger Hamlet restaurant.

April DuBoise, 27, a former waitress at the Hamburger Hamlet on Sepulveda Boulevard, has been charged with nine identity theft-related counts and five counts of grand theft. If convicted, she could face up to 12 years in jail and/or \$12,000 in fines. She is scheduled to be arraigned in Department 81 of Los Angeles Superior Court on June 25.

Citigroup and Secret Service investigators allege that DuBoise was approached last year by a man who offered her \$10 for every credit/debit card number she stole from customers at the Hamburger Hamlet. The man, who has not been positively identified and remains at large, provided DuBoise with a skimming device known as a “wedge”. Over the course of six weeks, DuBoise used the wedge device on as many as 40 customer credit cards and was paid \$200 by the man.

Citigroup investigators advised the Secret Service of the possible theft after six customers complained of a total of \$16,266 in unauthorized charges. All six had dined at the Hamburger Hamlet on Sepulveda Boulevard in early 2006. After interviewing the restaurant manager, investigators with the Secret Service and Citigroup identified DuBoise as the server on all six compromised Citigroup accounts. The investigation was subsequently forwarded to City Attorney Delgadillo’s Identity Theft and Fraud Unit for prosecution.

Criminals are able to capture consumers’ credit or debit card information by swiping their card through a skimming device, also known as a “wedge,” a small tool that reads and stores the data from the card for downloading to a computer. Wedges are frequently handheld, but can also be placed over an ATM or gas pump card reader. Once downloaded onto a computer, the stolen card data is encoded onto counterfeit cards.

Identity Theft is the fastest growing white collar crime in the nation; each year accounting for nearly \$500 billion in loss to the financial industry and affecting 10 million victims. Experts estimate victims spend up to 500 hours to resolve credit problems related to identity theft.

In order to prevent identity theft, City Attorney Delgadillo and other law enforcement agencies urge residents to take the following precautions:

- Check your financial statements on a regular basis and report irregular charges right away.
- Check your credit history at least once a year and report unauthorized activity or inaccurate information.
- Do not give out Personal Identifying Information unless you are absolutely sure that you are providing it to the right person for legitimate purposes. Your financial institution will never call you and ask you to verify your information.
- Check the access card insert area at all ATM machines to see if something was attached over it. Immediately report any suspicious device.
- Shred any unnecessary documents, including bank statements, expired credit cards, DVDs/CDs with personal information, old checks, etc.

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