Date December 05, 2019

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - Dec. 6, 2019



The holiday shopping season is in full swing and this week we issued several alerts to help Floridians avoid scams as they buy gifts and give to charity in celebration of the season.

It’s important to give and to experience the joy and kindness that accompanies these holidays, but we want to make sure the good-hearted nature of Floridians is not exploited by scammers who use the season to steal identities or hack credit card accounts.

To help guide shoppers, we issued our 2019 Holiday Shopping Guide. The guide is full of secure online shopping tips, wise-giving guidelines, information on toy recalls and much more to make your holiday shopping experience more joyful. The full guide can be downloaded for free here.

For the first time ever, the guide is also available in Spanish by clicking here.

With one less week between Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, many Floridians will be tackling their holiday shopping lists sooner. The fast pace of the shopping

season creates more opportunity for scammers. Take steps now to safeguard your personal information and finances to avoid falling prey to common holiday scams and identity theft.

Any consumer who has questions about making secure holiday shopping purchases or encounters a scam can call my office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visit MyFloridaLegal.com.

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Tragedy struck early Friday morning in Escambia County when a gunman opened fire at Naval Air Service Pensacola. Law enforcement took quick action to neutralize the shooter. Their bravery and fast response saved lives. Sadly, two Escambia County Sheriff's deputies were injured in the shootout. Three individuals were killed and several others wounded.

Please keep the first responders, our service members, the victims and their families in your prayers.



In The News

Attorney General Ashley Moody issues safer holiday shopping guide, WFLA Tampa

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Attorney General Moody Releases 2019 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide, WTXL Tallahassee

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CONSUMER ALERT: Millions available for victims of tech support scams, Action News Jax

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Tech-support scam victims can get a piece of Florida's settlement, FOX 13 News

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Florida Attorney General honors local deputy for work with "Project L.O.S.T", WPEC West Palm Beach

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First Lady Casey DeSantis launches campaign to educate children about the risks of drugs, vaping, FOX 35 Orlando

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SCAM ALERT: Attorney General Moody Issues Tips to Avoid Charity Fraud For Giving Tuesday, Space Coast Daily

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Protecting Floridians

Attorney General Moody Recognizes Giving Tuesday with Tips to Avoid Charity Fraud



Attorney General Ashley Moody is encouraging Floridians to give to legitimate charities and organizations. Last year, online donations on Giving Tuesday topped $380 million. With many Floridians making charitable donations through the end of the year, it is important to know how to avoid giving to fake or illegitimate charitable entities.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “The holiday season is a very popular time of the year to give to charities and worthwhile causes. Giving Tuesday reminds us to take a pause amidst the holiday shopping and think of those who are less fortunate. I want to encourage Floridians to give generously, but also to give wisely—by researching the charity’s name online first and checking out the charity’s ratings with organizations like the Better Business Bureau.” Read More

Attorney General Moody Reminds Tech Support Scam Victims of Deadline to File Claims



Attorney

General Ashley Moody is reminding thousands of tech support scam victims that millions of dollars in restitution are available. Following action taken by the Attorney General's Office that shut down several companies operating tech support scams, a multimillion-dollar claims fund is in place with more than $7 million available for eligible victims. The deadline to file a claim is Dec. 17.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "These tech support scams have stolen time, money and a sense of security from victims. If you are a victim of these scams, please check out our claims process and if you meet the eligibility requirements, make a claim for a refund. Don't leave potential money on the table—visit FloridaAGReimbursement.com today." Read More

PHOTO RELEASE: Attorney General Moody Sponsors Silver Alert Resolution



Attorney General Moody presented a resolution at a Florida Cabinet Meeting recognizing Florida's Silver Alert Program—a program designed to help law enforcement find older missing Floridians. The Governor and Florida Cabinet unanimously passed the resolution.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Protecting Florida's seniors is a major focus of my office. It is why I created a Senior Protection Team, and it is why, I am excited to celebrate more than a decade of Florida's Silver Alert Program. This life-saving program has reunited more than 2,100 missing Florida seniors with loved ones and caregivers. The possibility of an older family member going missing is a terrifying thought, but it is reassuring to know that Florida has as top-notch program in place to help rescue missing seniors." Read More

BACK THE BLUE ALERT: Attorney General Moody Recognizes St. Lucie Deputy for Finding Missing Seniors



Attorney General Ashley Moody presented a Back the Blue Award to a St. Lucie County Deputy for his dedication in tracking down missing individuals, many of whom are vulnerable citizens that have disabilities. Deputy Benjamin DeBlieck serves as co-manager of Project LOST—Locating Our Survivors Timely. The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office recently started the program that works with law enforcement and other agencies that specialize in neurocognitive disorders, such as Alzheimer's, autism, dementia and more. Deputy DeBlieck's service to the program and the Sheriff's office is crucial and has resulted in more than a dozen successful search and rescues.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Not only was Deputy DeBlieck off duty at the time of this critical search, he also helped another law enforcement agency rescue a senior woman who could have been seriously hurt or taken advantage of. Timing is so critical in these types of situations, and Deputy DeBlieck's immediate reaction and expertise proved life-saving. Thank you, Deputy DeBlieck, for your thoroughness and constant dedication to the citizens you serve." Read More

Real Estate Scheme Fraudster Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison



Attorney

General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a lengthy prison sentence for an individual convicted of running a real estate fraud scheme. An Orange County jury found Miguel Lopez guilty of first-degree felony grand theft and conspiracy in September. The Attorney General's Statewide Prosecutors secured a 10-year prison sentence for Lopez for using a phony real estate investment scheme to defraud Floridians out of more than half a million dollars.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Real estate scams are designed to dupe new or inexperienced investors into handing over thousands of dollars—often from money they are saving for retirement. At least one of the victims in this case invested an entire retirement fund to pursue this fraudulent real estate deal. Floridians need to remain on guard, if something seems too good to be true then it is probably a scam. Thankfully, the person responsible for this scheme will be locked away for a long time, unable to rip off people trying to invest for the future." Read More

Orange County Women Arrested for Aggravated Abuse of Mentally Disabled Adult



Attorney General Ashley Moody announced the arrest of an individual who allegedly abused a mentally disabled adult. Following an investigation by the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, the Orange County Sheriff's Office today arrested Juliet Haimes on one count of aggravated abuse of a mentally disabled person. The investigation found that Haimes, a former employee at the LaMirada group home in Winter Springs, maliciously punished a mentally disabled adult under Haimes' care. Read More

Events

This week, Attorney General Ashley Moody joined Governor Ron DeSantis, First Lady





Attorney General Moody with Alzheimer’s Community Care President and CEO Mary Barnes and St. Lucie County Sheriff’s Deputy Benjamin DeBlieck inside the Florida Cabinet Meeting Room. Barnes and Deputy DeBlieck attended a Cabinet Meeting where Attorney General Moody sponsored a resolution recognizing Florida’s Silver Alert Program. Attorney General Moody also surprised the deputy with a Back the Blue Award for his work rescuing lost Floridians.



Attorney General Moody with Governor DeSantis and Cabinet members recognizing Florida Highway Patrol Corporal Mithil Patel as the Trooper of the Year, along with his wife Arti. Attorney General Moody presented a Back the Blue Award to Corporal Patel

earlier this year for saving a man from an oncoming out-of-control vehicle. To read more about Corporal Patel receiving the Back the Blue Award, click here.



Attorney General Moody with husband Justin Duralia at the Governor’s Mansion for a holiday reception.



Attorney General Moody, with First Lady Casey DeSantis, speaking at the launch of a substance abuse prevention campaign called “The Facts. Your Future.” To watch the full news conference, click here.



Attorney General Moody announcing the unveiling of the 2019 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide in Coral Gables.


ATTORNEY GENERAL
ASHLEY MOODY

Attorney General Moody with members of the Cuban-American Bar Association in Miami. Now in its 45th year, CABA provides legal services and pro-bono work to the most vulnerable communities in South Florida.



Attorney General Moody visiting the Human Trafficking Center in Miami-Dade County, meeting with State Attorney Kathy Fernandez-Rundle, office staff and law enforcement officials.



Attorney General Moody being named an honorary member of Brigade 2506 by the Bay of Pigs Veterans Association in Miami.


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Attorney General Moody with Bal Harbour Mayor Gabe Groisman and City Manager Jorge Gonzalez.



Attorney General Moody with Bal Harbour Police Chief Raleigh Flowers.


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