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Safety tips offered in New Haven on scams, personal thefts

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Shown, l to r, New Haven police Lt. Jason Minardi; Kathleen Titsworth, Banking Outreach coordinator, state Department of Banking; New Haven police Detective Fred Salmeron; Angela DeLeon, Masters Program coordinator, Peoples United Bank, and New Haven Detective Rosealee Reid.

NEW HAVEN — About 50 people got tips on avoiding scams and personal thefts over the holidays at the recent “Safe-Tea,” presented by the Police Department, the state Department of Banking and **People’s United Bank**.

“All of us can unknowingly fall prey to scams throughout the year, particularly during the holiday season,” Continuum of Care President and CEO Patti Walker said in a release.

The event at the nonprofit Continuum of Care on Legion Avenue included tea and sandwiches. Continuum's mission is to enable people who are challenged with mental

illness, intellectual disability or other disability, and/or addiction, to rebuild meaningful lives and thrive in the community.

"Seniors, individuals with disabilities, and individuals challenged with mental health issues – these populations are particularly vulnerable to people taking advantage of them," Walker said in the release.

According to the release, Kathleen Titsworth, of the state Department of Banking, led a game called "F-R-A-U-D" that provided such safety tips as:

- Anything risk-free is a red flag. When it comes to investing, there's always risk.
- Identity thieves steal information such as name, address or date of birth to apply for credit or Social Security.
- Check bank statements regularly and immediately for accuracy and for unexpected charges.

New Haven police Lt. Jason Minardi, along with detectives Rosealee Reid and Fred Salmeron, shared tips for avoiding the perils caused by identity predators, the release said.

Reid emphasized the importance of shielding your debit card pin number by closely hovering one hand over the other hand while entering it on a machine.

"It doesn't matter whether it's an ATM or a store machine," she said in the release.

"Make sure you cover your fingers as you enter a pin so that numbers cannot be seen or detected by anyone or anything, including any tiny camera that may have been slyly inserted into the machine," she said. "Also, wipe all the keys when you are finished so that heat sensors cannot determine what key strokes you have made."

Women were warned to keep their purses closed and inside their coats, if possible, and men were advised to keep wallets in their front pockets and guarded.

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