

William P. Robertson
Acting Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 4, 2018

CONTACT:

Rebecca Clark 217-557-4756

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Most people spend several hours each day online for work, pleasure or both. The widespread usage of computers, laptops, smartphones and tablets offers countless opportunities to connect with information and people around the world. It also provides myriad opportunities for cyber criminals. During October, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is joining with the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT), as well as county and municipal emergency management agencies, to increase awareness of online risks and provide tips on what people can do to prevent problems.

“We place a high priority on cyber security in Illinois and many improvements are being achieved to strengthen the state’s defense and build awareness against this growing public safety issue,” said Kirk Lonbom, Acting Secretary for the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT). “Illinois is making impressive progress toward the goals detailed in the [state’s first cybersecurity strategy](#).”

The Ready Illinois website at www.Ready.Illinois.gov provides links to information and tips to help people minimize the risk of being a cybercrime victim. Some of those tips include the following:

- **Configure your computer securely**
Use privacy and security settings in your software, email system and web browsers. Regularly update your anti-virus software to identify and thwart new strains of malicious software.
- **Keep software and operating systems updated**
Install all software updates as soon as they are offered; using the “auto update” setting is the best way to ensure timely updates.
- **Use strong passwords**
Cybercriminals use automated programs that will try every word in the dictionary in a few minutes. When creating a password, use at least 10 characters, with a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols.

(-more-)

- **Be cautious about links and attachments**

Even communications you receive that appear to be from friends and family may contain links to malicious sites, so be careful when clicking on links in those messages. When in doubt, delete it.

Additionally, radio and television spots are airing statewide as part of the Ready Illinois broadcast preparedness campaign, which is aired in cooperation with the Illinois Broadcasters Association (IBA) Public Education Partnership program. The spots will air on more than 200 Illinois radio stations and more than 30 Illinois television stations.

The spots feature Abraham Lincoln outside the White House reviewing his five-step battle plan for the nation's current cyber security war. Mr. Lincoln reminds viewers and listeners of the following steps:

- 1) If it's too good to be true, it probably is;
- 2) Hover your cursor over the links to determine the true web address;
- 3) Look for misspellings and poor grammar, which are warning signs of fraud;
- 4) Be suspicious of emails requesting urgent action;
- 5) Never give away sensitive personal information.

To see the latest cyber security public service announcement or learn more about tips cyber safety, visit www.ready.illinois.gov.

###