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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: March 8, 2012

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***** National Consumer Protection Week Consumer Alert*****

NEVADA ATTORNEY GENERAL ALERTS SENIORS OF GRANDPARENT SCAM

Don't be Swindled by Phony "Grandchildren"

Carson City, NV – As part of the 14th annual National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto is advising Nevadans to be on the lookout for the grandparent scam, in which imposters call or e-mail unsuspecting victims, who tend to be seniors, pretending to be a relative, often a grandchild, and claim they need money because of an emergency.

The scammers typically urge an immediate wire transfer of funds. Once the money has been sent, it usually cannot be recovered.

"These scammers convey a sense of danger and urgency and prey on emotions to get money from well-meaning relatives," said Masto. "They will often find information about you and your family on the Internet, so they sound more convincing. Nevadans should be vigilant to protect themselves. Do not be afraid to say no, ask questions, or tell them you will call them back."

Common claims are that the person needs money because their car broke down or are trapped in a foreign country because of no money. Many times the scammers will pretend the situation is very urgent in order to force immediate action, allowing no chance to verify the story.

Here are some tips to spot these scams and guard against falling victim to them:

- If you receive a call from a person saying he knows you and is asking for money, call the relative yourself or other family or friends to confirm if the story is true.
- Ask the person on the phone about hard-to-know details of your relative's life. Examples include the last time you saw him or the date of his parents' wedding anniversary.

- Don't volunteer information to the person until you're sure to whom you are speaking.
- Guard your personal information online. For example, if you use social networking websites, only give access to information that you are comfortable having others know.
- Use updated antivirus software on your computer, and be careful when opening e-mails and e-mail attachments from addresses you don't recognize. Some malicious programs are able to obtain your personal information, which can then be used by criminals to better imitate your family members.
- Don't allow the caller to bully you into sending money before you're sure of his identity.

If you receive a call of this nature, hang up and do not send any money.

How to Report a Scam

If you believe you have are a victim of this scam and have given money, immediately contact your bank branch or the business used to wire the money and try cancel the transaction before the suspect picks up the money. Victims should then report the scam to their local police; the county the victim lives in or if it can be found, the jurisdiction to which the money was sent.

This consumer alert is part of National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), March 4-10, 2012. Starting Monday, March 5 and running through Friday, March 9, the Nevada Attorney General's Office will issue daily consumer alerts relevant to Nevadans.

More information about NCPW is also available at www.ncpw.gov. Consumer Protection information can also be found on the Attorney General's website (<http://ag.state.nv.us>), the Nevada Fight Fraud website (<http://fightfraud.nv.gov>) and the Federal Trade Commission website (www.ftc.gov).

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