



## Identify Fraud

With all the information about you floating around the internet and elsewhere, it's easier than ever for criminals to pretend they are you. According to the FBI, identity theft is the fastest growing white collar crime in the country.

Anyone could be a victim of identity fraud when personal financial information is used by someone else to obtain credit cards, money, property or loans. Victims can be left with damaged credit records that interfere with their ability to get loans

or acquire goods with credit. There are also considerable expenses associated with correcting credit records; such as lost time from work, affidavits and legal fees. Many companies now offer an optional coverage to help homeowner insureds recover losses associated with identity theft. The endorsement covers many expenses incurred due to identity fraud.

Contact your customer service representative for more information on this available coverage.

## Points of Interest

### Lead Poisoning Check-Up

**Lead poisoning can cause serious health and developmental problems in children. Learn how to check your home for lead sources with a free brochure. Log on to <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov> for more information.**

### Rego & Soares Join Staff

The Sylvia Group is pleased to announce the appointment of **Denise Rego** as a Customer Service Representative in the Personal Lines Department. She is a graduate of Dartmouth High School, a licensed insurance broker and a Certified Insurance Service Representative. She has 14 years of industry expertise, working as a customer service representative and a personal lines manager. Denise resides in Acushnet with her husband, Joseph, and their son, Joshua.

**Rosemarie Soares** has joined The Sylvia Group as the Account Manager in the Financial Services and Benefits Department. Rosemarie has over ten years of high-level administrative experience. She has worked for AIG Insurance Company as well as Investors Bank & Trust.

Rosemarie served six years in the Marine

Corps and left as a Sergeant and Administrative Chief specializing in all aspects of administration. During her tenure in the Marine Corps, she was honored by receiving two Navy & Marine Corps Achievement Medals, a Good Conduct Medal, various Certificates of Commendation and a letter of Commendation from the Commandant of the Marine Corps. A graduate of New Bedford High School, Rosemarie is a Notary Public and a certified EMT. She resides in New Bedford with her fiancé, Celio and two sons, Antonio and Jathan.

### Smart Idea.....

Here are five key ways you can help protect yourself and your family from identity theft.

1. Use a paper shredder for any documents that contain personal facts about you, including your date of birth and social security number.
2. Watch your credit report and check for any unfamiliar activity and errors.
3. Keep your important documents in a safe deposit box or other secure receptacle.
4. Protect your PINs and passwords by changing your bank, credit card and computer PINs and passwords.
5. Buy identity theft insurance. The pricing is modest and protects your assets.

### This Issue:

Identity Fraud Coverage	1
Smart Idea	1
Points of Interest	1
Annuities	2
Financial Planning	2

## We Want to Hear from You...

The Sylvia Group is dedicated to providing you with current insurance industry news. E-mail us your address and the topics you are most interested in. We will send you pertinent updates as we receive industry news.

[customers1st@sylviainsurance.com](mailto:customers1st@sylviainsurance.com)

## Is An Annuity For You?

Many people think that annuities are only for people who need retirement income or have large sums of money to invest. Did you know that they also provide the benefit of accumulating assets over time? With an annuity, your accumulated earnings are not taxed until they are withdrawn. There are flexible payment options as well as a wide range of investment choices.

Today, annuities come in many flexible varieties and options to suit the needs of a broad audience of investors.

If you are looking for a financial vehicle that:

- Is designed for the long term
- Provides income tax deferral on any earnings
- Can avoid the cost and delay of probate
- Offers numerous investment options
- Can include death benefit protection
- Can be customized to meet your individual needs

Then, you should consider annuities as another way to meet your financial goals. Contact Shawn Dooley, CFP, in our Financial Services Department to determine if an annuity is right for you.

## Financial Planning and Aging Parents

Although it's not an easy discussion to have, you should begin discussing financial matters with your parents when they are in their early sixties. Include immediate family members to prevent future misunderstandings, making sure to cover the following: **Where are personal records kept?** You don't need to know specifics, but you should find out where important records are located. (Insurance policies, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, etc.)

**Who are their advisors?** Ask for a list with names and contact information of all advisors and physicians. Get details about any medical conditions and medications being taken.

**What are their monthly income and expenses?** This will help you determine whether they have sufficient income to pay bills. If they don't, you may be able to help them change investment selections or increase their income.

**Do they have adequate insurance?** Make sure your parents have adequate health insurance coverage and have made provisions for long-term care needs. If they aren't interested in long-term care insurance, but you fear the burden of the care may fall on you, you may want to obtain the insurance for them.

**Do they have up to date estate planning documents?** You don't have to ask for specific information, just make sure the correct documents are in place so their wishes will be carried out.

**What are their preferences for their future?** Find out where your parents would like to live if they're not physically able to live in their current home. Discuss in detail what procedures they want to prolong life in the event of a terminal illness and determine their preferences for funeral arrangements.

While these topics are difficult, they are important to know in case you need to help your parents with financial matters. Please call our Financial Services and Benefits department if you'd like to discuss any financial planning issues with an experienced advisor.



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