



## News Release

For immediate release  
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### Free Shred-A-Thon

#### **Community Groups Call Arizona Consumers to Shred Old Documents to Prevent Identity Theft**

**PHOENIX, Arizona** – The public will be able to shred old documents free of charge at a community shred-a-thon to be held November 1, 2005 at Weyerhaeuser Document Destruction and Recycling in Phoenix. Hours of operation will be 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Arizona is the number one state for identification theft in the U.S. and Phoenix is the number one city for ID theft, according to data from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC). There were more than 8,000 reports of ID theft in Arizona last year, with the bulk of the problem in Phoenix with nearly 6,000 cases. Approximately 17% of Arizona victims were hit more than once. It's taken victims an average of one year to clear their names. The average amount of money stolen through ID theft is \$4,000 dollars.

Many of these crimes are low-tech and include methods such as dumpster-diving, mail theft and breaking and entering to steal documents with personal information such as social security numbers, birthdates, bank statements and credit card receipts, among other things.

#### **A Tale of Three States**

No one knows these statistics better than Chuck Bongiovanni of Phoenix. The 38 year-old small business owner had his identity stolen in 2004. Working with police and prosecutors he managed to piece together how he was ripped off. An alleged drug addict and convicted sex offender had managed to pull Bongiovanni's bank card information out of a dumpster behind a retail store and started a spending spree that spanned three states.

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The crimes committed with Bongiovanni's personal information included auto theft, bank fraud and drug possession. While the crime spree was occurring, Bongiovanni's bank accounts were frozen, which hurt his small business. He finally cleared his name and financial situation after nearly a year working to get his money back.

Authorities arrested a man in connection with the crime in California. The suspect was ordered to pay \$500 in restitution. As part of a plea bargain, his alleged identity theft and auto theft crimes were dismissed by a judge. He was put on parole for failure to register as a sex offender and for drug possession.

"The police and prosecutors in Arizona, New Mexico and California were extremely helpful," he says. He notes that he does not expect to see any of the restitution from the suspect. "It's funny how my ID theft was the crime that allowed authorities to arrest this guy, yet the case gets thrown out of court on a plea bargain."

These days Bongiovanni says he is extremely careful with his financial information, including credit card numbers. "I would never have caught this incident had I not been watching my bank account closely." He says his advice for people is to maintain strict control of your personal data and shred anything you don't need that may have information that can be used against you.

**Shred Old Records with Personal Information at Weyerhaeuser in Phoenix**

One of the best ways to minimize risk is to shred all documents no longer in use that may have person information such as name, address and social security numbers printed. Old tax records, credit card receipts and insurance forms are also documents that should be destroyed before disposal.

People are encouraged to bring in old records and receipts that may have personal information for destruction in Weyerhaeuser's industrial shredder. The first five boxes of personal files (the size of a Banker's Box®) will be destroyed without charge. Additional boxes will cost \$3 per box. This event is open to both consumers and businesses wishing to get rid of old files in a secure and confidential way. A certificate of destruction will be issued for items destroyed. Weyerhaeuser is located at 301 S. 30<sup>th</sup> St., Phoenix.

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### **Working Together in the Community**

Weyerhaeuser's community partners on the Shred-A-Thon include the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, 12 News and Global Fraud Solutions, a provider of industry-leading anti-fraud products and services. All of the organizations recognize that identity theft is a threat to the quality of living in Arizona and encourage the public at large to collect old documents and have them destroyed on November 1 at the Weyerhaeuser facility.



### **12 News**

12 News will once again be broadcasting live throughout the day at the shred-a-thon beginning with *12 News Today* at 5 am on November 1. The last shred-a-thon was a huge success as nearly 500 people brought in more than 25 tons of documents. "When you're trying to fight identity theft, the best thing you can do is take action," said Call 12 for Action reporter Rick DeBruhl. "Shredding old bank statements or personal papers is the one important way to make sure a thief doesn't take it out of your trash and use it to steal your identity."

### **About Global Fraud Solutions, LLC**

Global Fraud Solutions (GFS) provides industry-leading anti-fraud products and services to consumers, businesses, law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, service providers, victim and consumer advocacy groups, and professional organizations. From innovative and proprietary solutions such as the acclaimed, patent-pending CasePlanner™ Identity Theft software, to a full range of powerful anti-fraud, internet, and data security solutions for consumers and enterprise - GFS' products and services achieve outstanding results, provide significant savings of time, expense and resources, manage and reduce risk, and improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

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*Free Information and Consultation at Shred-A-Thon*

There will also be a variety of educational materials on how consumers can manage the risk of becoming victims of identity theft. Representatives from the Maricopa County Attorney's office and Global Fraud Solutions will be available to answer any questions people may have.

Weyerhaeuser is an NAID<sup>1</sup>-certified document destruction facility.

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**Community Links:**

**Maricopa County Attorney's Office**

<http://www.endidtheft.com>

**12 News**

<http://www.azcentral.com/12news/>

**Global Fraud Solutions/Avalon Strategies**

<http://www.globalfraudsolutions.com>

<http://www.avalonstrategies.com>

*A copy of Weyerhaeuser's Environmental and Safety report is available for download at:*

<http://www.weyerhaeuser.com/environment/sustainability/>

*Weyerhaeuser Company (NYSE: WY), one of the world's largest integrated forest products companies, was incorporated in 1900. In 2004, sales were \$22.7 billion. It has offices or operations in 19 countries, with customers worldwide. Weyerhaeuser is principally engaged in the growing and harvesting of timber; the manufacture, distribution and sale of forest products; and real estate construction, development and related activities. Additional information about Weyerhaeuser's businesses, products and practices is available at <http://www.weyerhaeuser.com>.*

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<sup>1</sup> National Association for Information Destruction