



Former Hanover man fights ID theft

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Jeff Rupp, formerly of Hanover, pushes a trash receptacle of documents to be shredded to his truck. Rupp is a partner in Incred-A-Shred of Baltimore, a document-shredding business. (Submitted Photo)

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There were 8.4 million Americans who were victims of identity theft in 2007.

That figure is down from the 10.1 million in 2003, according to surveys conducted by Javelin/Better Business Bureau.

Despite the recent decrease in identity theft the risk is still very high and former Hanover resident Jeff Rupp believes it is very important for people to be proactive in protecting themselves.

Rupp is a partner in the business Incred-A-Shred, based in Baltimore.

Incred-A-Shred travels to businesses and

residential areas to shred documents that contain confidential information for clients. Their clients range from hospitals, accountants, military offices and law offices.

"We provide our service to anyone and everyone," Rupp said. "We're trying to educate folks about identity theft."

The shredded documents are taken in a secure truck to a recycler where the shredded paper is reused. Rupp said one ton of paper equals about 20 trees. Incred-A-Shred serves a 150-mile radius around Baltimore and averages about 100 tons of shredded paper a month.

Rupp said that by law most businesses are required to shred documents with personal information on them. Human resources documents, payroll information, hospital records and consumer reports all contain confidential information that could easily be stolen.

Rupp said people need to be careful at home as well.

"A lot of people take their garbage for granted," Rupp said.

He said many people don't know a trash receptacle is considered public domain. If someone goes into a Dumpster-style receptacle and takes old bank records from it home with them, it's not considered illegal until the person does something with those records.

Rupp grew up in Hanover and is currently in the process of talking with several area townships to organize shredding days in the community.

He will be in Hanover at the end of the month to give a short presentation on identity theft and what

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Incred-A-Shred does. The presentation is in association with the Hanover Rotary Club and will be held during their meeting at noon Tuesday, July 29, at the La Cucina restaurant on Eisenhower Drive.

-- From Jeff Rupp

Rupp has had his own experiences that cause him to be cautious when dealing with his personal information. He once received a birthday card from his uncle that was already open, with \$100 missing from the envelope. He said he never puts up the flag on his mailbox because it is so easy for people to open up bills and steal personal information.

He encourages people to take precautions and always ask questions about where their personal information may be going, and also to utilize a service like the one Incred-A-Shred offers.

Rupp is happy with his seven month old company's business so far and hopes it will continue to grow.

"People can be confident in the security that we are providing for all their confidential information," Rupp said.

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Tips to protect against ID theft:

- * Don't give out personal information to anyone.
- * Always confirm the company is legitimate.
- * Always know when your bills arrive during the month. If they're late call to check if they were sent.
- * Always make sure the Verify security symbol is present when buying online.
- * Run a credit report once a year to be sure there are no fraudulent charges.

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