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**FOR RELEASE**

**Vantage West Credit Union Shares 7 Practical Tips
to Help You Protect Yourself from Financial Fraud and Identity Theft**

**Tucson, AZ – March 8, 2024** – March is International Fraud Prevention Month and Vantage West Credit Union would like to offer you seven practical tips to help you protect yourself against the increasing threat of financial scams and identity theft.

According to the [Federal Trade Commission (FTC)](https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/data-visualizations/explore-data), consumers reported losing more than $10 billion to fraud in 2023. That is an increase of 14% over 2022, with “investor scams” and “imposter scams” generating the highest losses.

Victims of fraud frequently seek assistance from their trusted financial institutions. While committed teams at credit unions such as Vantage West and other financial institutions actively work to combat and prevent fraud, there are occasions where challenges can persist beyond immediate resolution. According to Sharon Grieger, Chief Risk Officer at Vantage West, “It is devastating to see the damage that fraud can cause for consumers.” (THEY) added, “Vantage West will always do what we can to help our Members, but the best approach to fight fraud is to prevent it.”

Here are a few ways you can protect yourself against these treats and prevent fraud:

1. **Stay Informed:** Keep abreast of the latest fraud tactics and scams. Vantage West provides regular updates on emerging threats in the [Security Center](https://vantagewest.org/security/) on their website.
2. **Guard Personal Information:** Vantage West Credit Union will NEVER request your User ID, Password or any one-time PINs or codes needed to log in to online banking. This information is your personal information, and we urge you to NEVER share that information with anyone. If you are unsure of the identity of a person claiming to be a Vantage West employee hang up and call us back at (800) 888-7882 .
3. **Beware of Phishing**: Do not click on any email or text message link you don’t recognize. Verify the authenticity of such communications by contacting your financial institutions directly. [Learn about the difference between Phishing, Smishing, and Spoofing.](https://vantagewest.org/security-center-phishing-smishing-and-spoofing/)
4. **Monitor Accounts:** Take the time to review bank and credit card statements regularly. Promptly report any unauthorized transactions or discrepancies.
5. **Employ Strong Passwords:** Create strong and unique passwords for online accounts, avoiding easily guessable information like birthdays or names.
6. **Set Up Two-Factor Authentication:** Enhance online account security by enabling two-factor authentication wherever possible. This additional layer of protection ensures an added level of security.
7. **Secure Your Devices:** Keep devices secure with up-to-date antivirus software and security patches. Use secure Wi-Fi connections and avoid accessing sensitive information on public networks.

Vantage West encourages the public to employ these fraud prevention practices and invites them to access additional resources available in the [Security Center](https://vantagewest.org/security/) on their website.

**About Vantage West Credit Union**

Vantage West is one of Arizona’s largest credit unions. It was established in 1955 to serve personnel at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Today Vantage West serves a diverse membership base across Arizona and beyond, with cutting-edge digital services. Vantage West offers consumer and business banking and retirement services. Vantage West is federally insured by NCUA and an Equal housing opportunity lender. Learn more at [www.VantageWest.org.](http://www.vantagewest.org/)