



Merchants Launches SmartIDentity™ ID Theft Recovery Protection For Residential Rental Property Owners & Renters... An Industry First!

SmartIDentity™ --Reduces Legal, Financial Risk for Owners, Protects Employees, Renters

Offered at No Cost, Limited Time to Select Merchants Resident Screening Customers

Las Vegas, Nevada, June 30, 2009—Merchants Information Solutions announced its latest risk management innovation: SmartIDentity™ ID theft recovery protection to benefit rental community owners and their renters and employees at the National Apartment Association's 2009 Education, Conference, & Exposition. Adding ID Theft recovery protection to Merchants industry-leading resident background screening services is the company's latest effort to help its residential leasing customers reduce risk from legal and financial costs and damage to brand image.

With identity theft at epidemic levels and skyrocketing financial and legal liabilities for business owners whose customers' or employees' ID information is breached and used by ID thieves, Merchants saw an opportunity to better protect the residential leasing industry. Added to this is the ability of residential property owners and managers to use Merchants SmartIDentity™ ID theft recovery protection to beat the competition and as a revenue generator through an optional customized affinity program offered to renters.

"Merchants saw an ID theft risk looming for residential property owners and managers as well as their employees and tenants. We've addressed this critical danger looming over the residential leasing industry because we know that we are really in the business of protecting the financial interests of our customers and their brand perception," said Russ Johnson, CEO Merchants. "Innovating to empower our customers has been our mantra since we began in 1912," Johnson added.

Driving the surge in ID theft—particularly in the residential rental industry-- are the down economy and the transient nature of rental communities. Identity theft will impact nine million Americans this year according to the FTC. To date published reports tally a total 262 million employee, customer and individual ID records have been breached. ID theft is going to happen according to the FBI —like car accidents--making ID theft recovery protection as fundamental as car repair insurance.

"Adding SmartIDentity™ makes perfect sense as apartment renters have a significantly higher risk of identity theft. For example, the average individual has to communicate a change of address and related information to 15-20 organizations including banks, credit card issuers, phone, cable, utilities, doctors, home and auto insurance, life insurance etc. Therefore the chance of this information being lost or stolen is heightened," said Mark Pribish, Merchants Vice President and Identity Theft Practice Leader.

Costs to the residential rental community property owner without ID theft recovery protection when employee or customer ID's are stolen and used can cost up to \$20,000 per individual ID. These costs—without recovery protection-- can include court judgments and corrective actions within the organization.

Merchants advises its customers that alerts of an ID being used are only a partial solution and that recovery and remediation protection are the keys to real protection from the devastation of ID theft. Merchants **SmartIDentity™** recovery-remediation has powerful and effective features:

- Merchants Recovery Advocates are all specialists in identity theft remediation
- Merchants Recovery Advocates are all licensed private investigators, FCRA and FACT Act certified
- Merchants Recovery Advocates acts on the consumers behalf (making the phone calls, emails, etc. with the affected creditors) to "fully manage" their recovery from identity theft to a pre-event status

“Adding identity theft services to our background screening line not only makes sense, but it is clearly the right thing to do”, said James Palmer vice president and national sales director, Merchants. Merchants provides background screening services to many communities across the nation which includes accessing credit reports, criminal histories, and related information. Apartment communities have a genuine business need to access this information about their prospective residents.

Understanding the risk that apartment renters face, Merchants is making the new **SmartIDentity™** service available to all current and new multi-unit rental properties that purchase Merchants Resident Background Screening services. Property owners and management benefit by not only being able to protect their residents from the threat of identity theft, but their employees can enjoy this same benefit under the same program.

Merchants is introducing the new expansion to the resident background screening service offering on a no additional cost basis for a limited time and to select customers. “Offering **SmartIDentity™** to our customers entails costs to us, but with the industry struggling, Merchants will seize the opportunity to innovate and to help lead to more prosperous times ahead”, added Johnson

Merchants will begin hosting orientation webinars with its clients next month, to familiarize them with the new expanded service offering.

About Merchants Information Solutions: Founded in 1912, Merchants is a leading provider of low-cost identity theft protection and recovery solutions, helping to support the risk management objectives of financial institutions, associations, employer groups, and the automotive industry, by offering revenue opportunities through fee-based subscription services. Merchants also has a robust line of on-demand background screening solutions empowering pre-employment, tenant screening and behavioral physiological assessment clients to instantly assess candidates in minutes. For more information, visit www.merchantsinfo.com.