

ARTICLES FOR 9-7-17 ROUNDUP

WISCONSIN AAG DAVID P. ROSS TAPPED FOR TOP EPA POST

MADISON, Wis. – Today, President Donald J. Trump announced his intent to nominate Assistant Attorney General David P. Ross to serve as Assistant Administrator of the Office of Water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Ross is currently the Wisconsin Department of Justice’s Environmental Protection Unit Director.

“Wisconsin will lose a great environmental specialist when Dave departs, but I’m thrilled the entire nation will benefit from Dave’s breadth and depth of knowledge and experience,” said Attorney General Schimel. “We appreciate Dave’s service to our State and wish him the best in his new adventure at the EPA.”

Ross joined the Wisconsin Department of Justice in 2016, after returning home to Wisconsin from Wyoming, where he served as a senior assistant attorney general in the Wyoming Attorney General’s Office. In that role, Ross represented the Water Quality Division of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. Ross also represented the State of Wyoming on the Assumable Waters Subcommittee of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology. Prior to entering the public sector, Ross served as a partner in the environmental practice group of a large national law firm.

“David Ross’s expertise in promoting environmental stewardship and enacting responsible enforcement will be a welcome addition to EPA,” said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. “Having served as Wisconsin’s Assistant Attorney General and Director of the Environmental Protection Unit, David is especially qualified to head EPA’s Office of Water and to carry out the Trump Administration’s mission of returning power back to the states and advancing regulatory certainty.”

Ross is an Appleton native and attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison for undergraduate studies. Ross earned his law degree, magna cum laude, and a Master of Studies in Environmental Law, summa cum laude, from Vermont Law School, one of the nation’s leading environmental law programs. While at Vermont Law School, Dave served as Editor-in-Chief of the Vermont Law Review.

AIRBNB ASSISTS WITH HURRICANE RELIEF

Dear CWAG,

As valued partners in our ongoing work, we wanted to pass along some updated information on our disaster response efforts following Hurricane Harvey as we are working to spread the word to help as many people as possible in the region. We ask that you share this information to your networks so as many people as possible can benefit from our generous host community.

In response to the flooding following Hurricane Harvey, we are expanding our Disaster Response Program to provide free temporary housing accommodations to affected residents and we’re also

helping emergency responders and relief workers - so the need is great. We are working with many partners to spread the word, as well as add more hosts and available housing. All available housing will be free to evacuees through September 25.

Below is more information on the program and how to access and add accommodations:

- In the event of major emergencies like this one, Airbnb's Disaster Response Program activates our hosts to support neighbors helping neighbors, allowing residents who have been displaced -- as well as emergency relief workers and volunteers who are coming in to assist -- to find temporary housing with local Airbnb hosts who are opening their homes free of charge. All service fees are waived.
- To request to book accommodations, or to sign up your home for those displaced, please use this link: <https://www.airbnb.com/disaster/hurricanearveyevacuees?page=34>
- **Responders and Survivors can access \$0 listings in one of two ways:**
 - You can direct your responders and support partners to <https://www.airbnb.com/disaster/hurricanearveyevacuees>. There they can access all the \$0 listings for hurricane Harvey and identify a place that's suitable for them to stay. **Click "I need a place to stay" to search for a listing (otherwise you will click each listing).**
 - If organizations don't already have a corporate account with Airbnb, we can create a business travel account for (agency/company), add their employees to that corporate account as travel managers and bookers and they can then book accommodations for themselves as well as on behalf of other employees through <https://www.airbnb.com/disaster/hurricanearveyevacuees>.

And here's a suggested tweet/ FB post to share:

More housing options avail as @Airbnb launches HOU disaster program. Hosts opening homes for \$0 to evacuees <https://t.co/ddzpMNng14>

THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION COMMITS \$1 MILLION TO HURRICANE HARVEY DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS

ATLANTA, Aug. 28, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- The Home Depot® Foundation today announced its commitment of \$1 million to support Hurricane Harvey disaster relief efforts in Texas and Louisiana.

Funds will be distributed to several nonprofit partners including the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Convoy of Hope, Operation Blessing and Team Rubicon to support both short-term relief and rebuilding needs.

"Our hearts and full support go out to our communities, customers and associates that are being impacted by Hurricane Harvey," said Shannon Gerber, executive director of The Home Depot Foundation. "The Home Depot Foundation and Team Depot volunteers will work alongside our disaster relief partners to assist the people and areas impacted by this catastrophic storm."

In addition to helping the communities affected by Hurricane Harvey, the Foundation's employee assistance program, The Homer Fund, will provide emergency financial assistance to associates who have been affected by this tragedy.

About The Home Depot Foundation

The Home Depot Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to improving the homes and lives of U.S. veterans and their families with a specific focus on combat-wounded, senior and homeless veterans. The Foundation also provides cleanup and rebuilding support for communities affected by natural disasters.

Since 2011, The Home Depot Foundation has invested approximately \$200 million in veteran-related projects, part of the Foundation's quarter of a billion-dollar pledge to veteran-related causes by 2020. In partnership with Team Depot, the 400,000-strong army of associate volunteers, the organization has positively impacted more than 33,000 veterans' homes and helped more than 2,000 communities.

To learn more about The Home Depot Foundation and see Team Depot in action visit homedepot.com/teamdepot and follow us on Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram @teamdepot and like us on Facebook at facebook.com/teamdepot.

For hurricane-related information about The Home Depot's operations, please visit corporate.homedepot.com/newsroom.

WALMART CEO DOUG MCMILLON'S NOTE TO ASSOCIATES ON HURRICANE HARVEY

After four days, Hurricane Harvey continues to leave behind a wake of destruction far beyond what most people imagined.

Our hearts go out to our associates, customers and communities impacted by this unrelenting storm.

I'm proud of how so many of you are stepping up and helping out during this very difficult time. From volunteering and delivering more than 1,000 truckloads of water, food and other necessities; to providing diapers, blankets, fresh produce, toys and personal hygiene products to those living in shelters — you are making a difference for people suffering unimaginable loss.

Last week we made an initial commitment of \$1 million to support the relief efforts. But as the extent of the devastation becomes clearer, we've decided to do even more. Walmart will give \$20 million in cash and in-kind donations, including a two-to-one customer match. Our primary focus is to help ensure the health, safety and comfort of the people residing in mega shelters in Houston and Dallas. We're staying in close contact with the Red Cross, government officials and our teams in Texas to understand how else we can help.

I'm proud of how so many of you are stepping up and helping out during this very difficult time.

You've heard me say before that it's the humanity of our people that sets us apart. This is who we are and this is what we do. Your commitment to the business, our customers and communities is undeniable and I could not be more proud. It's this commitment I'm counting on in the coming weeks as we work to get affected stores and clubs back up and running and help restore our communities. We are simply better together. Thank you.

GIVE, BUT GIVE WISELY, TO HURRICANE HARVEY VICTIMS

Attorney General offers disaster relief giving tips

DES MOINES – As Iowans answer the call to help Hurricane Harvey victims, Attorney General Tom Miller reminds Iowans to give generously, but to give wisely.

“Iowans are already stepping up to help the staggering number of people impacted by this unprecedented hurricane and flooding event,” Miller said. “I want to ensure that Iowans trying to help people who are suffering aren’t themselves victimized by scammers.”

Tips for Giving Wisely

Know who you are giving to. Give to established and familiar organizations. While many pop-up relief efforts may be legitimate, others may provide relatively small amounts of donations to those who need them, or may even be outright scams. Be watchful for sound-alike organizations.

Be wary of callers seeking donations. Don’t give to someone who calls you unless you are certain the caller represents an organization you are familiar with. Scammers can spoof caller ID to fake the information that appears on your display. Using a credit card, versus a debit card, provides you with additional consumer protections. Avoid using a pre-paid money card or wiring money, and do not provide gift card numbers.

Be wary of emails and social media posts seeking donations. If you receive an email seeking a donation, be careful about clicking on links or attachments, which could contain malicious software (malware). Scammers can direct you to fake websites that look legitimate but are not. It’s best to go to that organization’s known website if you plan to donate online.

Avoid providing cash to someone who shows up at your door. Ask to see the person’s identification, and don’t let someone pressure you into allowing him or her inside or into you making a donation on the spot. It’s best to let the person know you will consider donating directly to the organization. If you decide to donate through that person, ask for a receipt. If you feel uncomfortable about the situation, call law enforcement.

Be cautious about crowdfunding. There are legitimate online crowdfunding disaster relief efforts, but there are also ones to avoid. Treat a crowdfunding effort like you would treat a donation jar placed next to a cash register—make sure you understand the person or organization behind it, exactly how your contribution will be used, whether your donation is tax-deductible, whether a third party collects fees in conjunction with the crowdfunding site, whether the website protects

you against fraud, and whether the site has a policy about protecting and sharing your personal information.

To learn more about a charity, go online. Several organizations provide free online resources to help you evaluate a charity, including whether it's a tax-exempt organization and how much it spends on administrative expenses. Places to check include the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance (give.org), GuideStar (guidestar.org), Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org). You can check an organization's tax status through IRS Select Check at (www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-select-check).

If you suspect a disaster relief effort is fraudulent, contact the Consumer Protection Division at 515-281-5926 or toll-free at 888-777-4590 (outside the Des Moines metro area only), email consumer@iowa.gov, or file a complaint at iowaattorneygeneral.gov.

AG PAXTON WARNS GAS STATIONS AGAINST FRAUD IN WAKE OF HURRICANE HARVEY

Attorney General Ken Paxton issued a warning to gas stations against any attempt to take advantage of Texas consumers by fraudulent action in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. The Consumer Protection Division of the attorney general's office received more than 500 complaints today, many of which involve allegations of high fuel prices in Dallas, including amounts ranging from \$6-\$8 dollars per gallon.

"Texas law protects consumers from fraud in Dallas and other parts of Texas outside of the governor's declared disaster areas," said Marc Rylander, communications director for the attorney general's office. "If Dallas consumers are victims of fraud by gas stations, we urge them to contact our agency's consumer protection hotline so that we can investigate and take appropriate action."

Victims of fraud can report it immediately by calling the attorney general's Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-621-0508, emailing consumeremergency@oag.texas.gov, or filing a complaint online at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov. Consumers are encouraged to submit photos and photo copies of gas receipts with their complaints, if possible.

ATTORNEY GENERAL BONDI ACTIVATES PRICE GOUGING HOTLINE AS HURRICANE IRMA APPROACHES

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi tonight activated Florida's price gouging hotline for all consumers in Florida. The opening of the hotline comes as Governor Rick Scott declares a state of emergency in all 67 Florida counties in response to threats posed by Hurricane Irma—now a Category 4 hurricane that could impact the state this week.

"Floridians need to prepare now and they should not be inhibited by unlawful price increases on supplies necessary to brace for a major hurricane strike—that is why I've activated Florida's Price Gouging Hotline and encourage anyone who suspects price gouging to report it to my office by calling (866)-9-NO-SCAM," said Attorney General Bondi. "By reporting suspected price gouging you can protect yourself and your fellow Floridians."

State law prohibits extreme increases in the price of essential commodities, such as food, water, hotels, ice, gasoline, lumber and equipment, needed as a direct result of an officially declared emergency. Anyone who suspects price gouging during this declared state of emergency should report it to the Attorney General's Office by calling 1-866-9-NO-SCAM.

Violators of the price gouging statute are subject to civil penalties of \$1,000 per violation and up to a total of \$25,000 for multiple violations committed in a single 24-hour period, in addition to other civil penalties that may apply. State law also criminalizes the sale of goods and services to the public without possession of an occupational license. Violators of the law can be charged with a second-degree misdemeanor.

Specifically, Section 501.160 Florida Statute states that during a state of emergency, it is unlawful to sell, lease, offer to sell, or offer for lease essential commodities, dwelling units, or self-storage facilities for an amount that grossly exceeds the average price for that commodity during the 30 days before the declaration of the state of emergency, unless the seller can justify the price by showing increases in its costs or market trends.

**GOOGLE, INC. ORDERED TO COMPLY WITH SEARCH WARRANTS
ISSUED IN INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING THE SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN**

CONTACT: TJ Donovan, Attorney General, (802) 595-8679

The Vermont Superior Court, Addison Criminal Division, ordered Google, Inc. to comply with Vermont search warrants. The search warrants sought computer records and files related to the alleged sexual exploitation of children. Google refused to produce such files because they were stored on overseas servers. The search warrants were issued in three separate criminal investigations, two of which the Attorney General's Office is prosecuting and one of which the Addison County State's Attorney's Office is prosecuting.

Google justified its refusal to comply with the warrants by relying on a separate decision in the case of the *United States v. Microsoft*. In that case, a federal judge issued a search warrant under the federal Stored Communications Act (SCA), authorizing the search of a specific Microsoft Outlook email account. Microsoft asserted it would be an impermissible extraterritorial application of the SCA to require it to retrieve data from a foreign server, even though Microsoft could access that data from its offices in the United States. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit agreed with Microsoft and quashed the warrant. The federal government has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review and reverse the Second Circuit's decision. The Vermont Attorney General's Office is leading a bipartisan coalition of 32 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico that support the federal government's request.

The Addison Criminal Division disagreed with Google's reliance on the Second Circuit's decision in *United States v. Microsoft*. It then held that Vermont's Electronic Communications Privacy Act requires Google to produce data in response to search warrants issued by Vermont courts even if that data is stored overseas. The court recognized that the State receives and reviews the data Google produces in response to the warrant here in Vermont. Therefore, the search and seizure

occurs in Vermont, not overseas. A full copy of the Court's order can be found [here](#). Google has appealed the order to the Vermont Supreme Court.

With respect to the ongoing litigation, Attorney General Donovan and State's Attorney Wygmans state, "Unfortunately, many individuals use the electronic communications providers to commit crimes. These include sexually exploiting children over the internet by luring children to engage in sex acts and creating and distributing child pornography. Electronic communications providers' refusal to comply with lawfully issued search warrants unreasonably compromises law enforcement's ability to investigate these crimes and keep children safe."

MONTANA DOJ ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF GRANTS TO FUND WISHES OF STATE'S SERIOUSLY ILL CHILDREN

Today, the Montana Department of Justice announced the availability of \$25,000 in Chrome for Kids Wish Fund grants. These funds are made available through a special Chrome for Kids motorcycle license plate that is used to fund efforts by Montana-based nonprofit corporations which grant wishes to chronically or critically ill Montana children.

"For the third time in six years, we are pleased to offer these funds to Montana non-profits who serve critically ill children and their families," said Attorney General Tim Fox. "I'm proud of the work our Motor Vehicle Division does to make Chrome for Kids Wish Fund grants available, as well as of Montana's motorcycle owners, whose generosity ultimately translates into meaningful experiences for children who need them most."

To date, the Montana Department of Justice has awarded nearly \$100,000 in Chrome for Kids grants. Sarah Garcia, Motor Vehicle Division Administrator, said, "This program speaks to the generosity of Montanans that lend a hand in times of need. We encourage all non-profits that meet the criteria to apply for this special grant."

Grant applications will be accepted by the Motor Vehicle Division at the Montana Department of Justice through October 30, 2017. Grants will be awarded by November 30, 2017. Funds awarded through these grants must be used within two years of the award.

Grant criteria are:

- (1) Only Montana-based nonprofit public or private corporations which have received IRS 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt designation and whose purpose includes assistance to chronically or critically ill Montana children may apply for a Chrome for Kids Wish Fund grant.
- (2) Funds must be used to provide a chronically or critically ill Montana child a special wish. No more than 10% of awarded grant funds can be used for program administration by the applicant.
- (3) Children's wishes shall be determined by the parents or legal guardians of minor children in consultation with the child and an attending healthcare provider and may be of the following type: (a) a visit to a special place such as a children's theme park or a city or metropolitan area to experience unique or different food, arts, education, entertainment, and culture; (b) a trip to

participate in or observe a special activity such as a rodeo, baseball game, surfing, or other physical/sports activity; (c) financial assistance to provide improvement in the quality of life for the critically or chronically ill child as determined by the attending physician and parents/legal guardian; or (d) a special activity such as a birthday party or celebration of the child's life as determined by parents/legal guardian.

Grant applicants must submit the following materials with each grant application: The legal title of the nonprofit organization and the address of its principal office; a list of the organization's board members and their occupations; a copy of the organization's IRS tax-exempt designation; the name of the proposed grant, the amount of funding requested, the general purpose of the proposed grant, a specific description of how any awarded grant funds would be used; and any evidence of public support for the proposed grant. Successful grant applicants will be required to provide the Montana Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division with a report, once grant funds are exhausted, that details specifically how the grant funds were used.

Applications can be submitted to the attention of the Montana Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division Administrator at PO Box 201430, Helena, Montana 59620-1430; or emailed to mvdttitleinfo@mt.gov. For more information, call (406) 444-3933.

See the Chrome For Kids motorcycle plate here: <https://dojmt.gov/licenseplategallery/chrome-for-kids/>

AG BRNOVICH FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST OPIOID MANUFACTURER INSYS THERAPEUTICS AND THREE ARIZONA DOCTORS

Contact: Mia Garcia (602) 339-5895 or Mia.Garcia@azag.gov

PHOENIX – Attorney General Mark Brnovich today filed an Arizona Consumer Fraud lawsuit against opioid manufacturer Insys Therapeutics Inc., which is based in Chandler. The lawsuit alleges that Insys engaged in a fraudulent marketing scheme designed to increase the sales of Subsys, a highly addictive opioid prescription drug that contains fentanyl.

“We need to put a stop to the unethical and greedy behavior in the pharmaceutical industry that is fueling the opioid crisis in our state,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich.

Three Arizona doctors are also named in the State’s lawsuit. Steve Fanto, Nikesh Seth, and Sheldon Gingerich allegedly collected sham educational “speaker fees” in exchange for writing prescriptions for Subsys. The complaint alleges that from March 2012 to April 2017, more than \$33 million or 64 percent of Subsys sales in Arizona came from prescriptions written by Fanto, Seth, and Gingerich.

According to the lawsuit, Insys also violated the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act by providing insurers with false and misleading information to obtain prior authorization for Subsys prescriptions for patients. For example, Insys employees were allegedly instructed to mislead insurers into believing that patients who were prescribed Subsys had cancer when in fact they did not.

The lawsuit also alleges that Insys provided health care providers with false and misleading information that the FDA had approved Subsys for more uses than the FDA had actually approved. According to the complaint, Insys falsely advertised Subsys as appropriate treatment for mild pain. Subsys is a powerful opioid approved by the FDA for the management of breakthrough pain in cancer patients. Alec Burlakoff, the former Vice President of Sales for Insys, and Elizabeth Gurrieri, the former Manager of Reimbursement Service for Insys, are also named in the lawsuit. To date, Insys has sold approximately \$1 billion worth of Subsys.

In the lawsuit, AG Brnovich is seeking remedies that include an injunction to stop Insys from continuing the alleged deceptions and misrepresentations, restitution for consumers, and disgorgement of all profits and gains obtained as a result of the alleged illegal conduct.

Consumer Litigation Unit Chief Counsel Matthew du Mee is the lead attorney on this case.

TWO INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED, ARRAIGNED IN CONNECTION WITH TRAFFICKING HEROIN AND FENTANYL IN LAWRENCE

LAWRENCE – Two individuals have been arrested and arraigned in connection with a joint federal and state investigation into a fentanyl and heroin trafficking network in Lawrence, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Authorities arrested Waldemar Ortiz-Jacome, a.k.a. Jonathan Guerrero, age 33, and Jose Guerrero-Soto, age 24, both of Lawrence, on Thursday in Lawrence in a joint operation conducted by Massachusetts State Police assigned to the AG's Office, the State Police Transportation Drug Unit, the Drug Enforcement Agency and Homeland Security Investigations.

They were arraigned Friday morning in Lawrence District Court. Ortiz-Jacome was arraigned on one count of trafficking more than 200 grams of heroin and one count of trafficking fentanyl. Guerrero-Soto was arraigned on one count of possession of cocaine and one count of possession of heroin. They were both charged with one count each of conspiracy, possession of a firearm, possession of ammunition and improper storage of a firearm.

Ortiz-Jacome was held on \$500,000 cash bail and Guerrero-Soto was held on \$1,000 cash bail. They are due back in Lawrence District Court on Oct. 4 for a probable cause hearing.

“The opioid epidemic is continuing to plague communities across our state,” said AG Healey. “We are committed to working with our state, federal and local partners to go after these criminal networks that bring these deadly drugs into our communities and into the hands of those battling with addiction.”

“Opioid abuse is at epidemic levels in Massachusetts and across the North East,” said Special Agent in Charge Michael J. Ferguson. “Fentanyl and heroin are causing deaths across the Commonwealth in record numbers and DEA is committed to aggressively pursue drug trafficking organizations and individuals who distribute these poisons in order to profit and destroy people's

lives. This investigation demonstrates the strength of collaborative law enforcement efforts in Massachusetts and our strong partnership with Attorney General Healey's office."

"Fentanyl and other deadly opioids continue to claim far too many American lives," said HSI Boston Special Agent in Charge Matthew Etre. "HSI and our partners are proud to be at the forefront of combating these dangerous drugs and ridding the community of the individuals who distribute this poison."

Authorities began investigating this criminal network that was allegedly distributing drugs in Lawrence in August 2017.

Ortiz-Jacome was arrested as he was attempting to sell one kilogram of fentanyl and two kilograms of heroin in Lawrence on Thursday. Authorities later located and arrested Guerrero-Soto at Ortiz-Jacome's apartment in Lawrence. Authorities found Guerrero-Soto with cocaine and heroin in his possession.

During the execution of a search warrant at a stash house, authorities located a handgun, ammunition, approximately 1,500 grams of a fentanyl and heroin mixture, kilogram presses, finger presses and materials used for the sale and distribution of drugs. Authorities simultaneously executed a second search warrant at Ortiz-Jacome's residence, where they located a handgun and a large capacity magazine.

This investigation is ongoing. These charges are allegations and defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Cesar Vega, of AG Healey's Enterprise, Major and Cyber Crimes Division with Assistant Attorney General Gina Kwon, Deputy Chief of AG Healey's Enterprise and Major and Cyber Crimes Division, with assistance from State Police assigned to the AG's Office, the Massachusetts State Police Transportation Drug Unit, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and Homeland Security Investigations.

ATTORNEY GENERAL HILL AND STAFF RETURN NEARLY \$400,000 IN UNCLAIMED MONEY AT THE INDIANA STATE FAIR

INDIANAPOLIS – Attorney General Curtis Hill today announced that his staff helped return nearly \$400,000 in unclaimed money at the Indiana State Fair.

The Office of the Indiana Attorney General operated a booth inside the Expo Hall at the state fairgrounds for 16 days. During that time, staff members helped approximately 6,530 Hoosiers with everything from consumer protections tips, signing up for the Do Not Call list and recovering unclaimed money.

A total of \$398,701.58 in unclaimed money was returned to Hoosiers during the fair with several individual claims exceeding \$10,000.

Hoosiers who stopped by the booth at the state fair experienced the same services that are being offered when the office's Mobile Operations Center (MOC) visits cities and towns across Indiana. The MOC has allowed members of the communications staff to enhance public outreach, bringing constituent services to citizens statewide and further educating the public about the Office of the Indiana Attorney General.

Since May, the office has visited 51 counties and returned \$84,106.52 in unclaimed money.

UTILITIES UNITED AGAINST SCAMS

Across North America, criminals are calling residential and small business utility customers threatening to disconnect their electricity, water, or gas service and demanding immediate payment from the customers through a prepaid card purchased from a local retail store. Victims have reported paying from hundreds to thousands of dollars to these crooks who frequently target vulnerable populations, including senior citizens and non-native English speakers, and more recently small businesses at their busiest times of the workday. These utility impostors are increasingly using more sophisticated tactics including spoofing technology to display the utility company's name on the customer's caller identification and recordings of the utility company's telephone menu messages, or interactive voice response.

In 2016, Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) was formed, an all-utility collaborative with the mission to "combat utility scams by providing a forum for utility companies and associations to share data and best practices and to work together to implement initiatives to inform and protect customers." In coordinating its efforts across North America, UUAS is magnifying the scale and impact of its consumer education and utility scam-awareness campaign.

To date, UUAS is comprised of over 100 U.S. and Canadian electric, gas, and water utility company members, along with their respective trade associations. UUAS organizes regular member forums for utility information exchange and collaboration. The consortium is continuously updating its campaign content, messaging, and templates for use by its members.

In November 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution designating the third Wednesday of November as "Utility Scam Awareness Day" with its inaugural day on November 16, 2016. The goal was to encourage utilities to use the day to raise awareness and knowledge amongst themselves and the general public regarding the threats posed, the techniques and tools used by criminals, and how to avoid them. The second annual Utility Scam Awareness Day is set for November 15, 2017. But one day of education is not enough.

The consortium is expanding its partnerships beyond the utility industry. At its 2017 in-person meeting, the organization heard from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Better Business Bureau, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, AARP, and others on ways to better educate and protect consumers from utility impostor scams. The FBI and DHS stressed the importance of UUAS members collecting scam victim information in a single database, sharing that information with them, and helping them more effectively target scammers.

In addition, UUAS has partnered with Somos, the Federal Communications Commission's designated Toll-Free Neutral Administrator, providing toll-free numbers utilized by criminals allowing Somos to shut those numbers down. Somos manages more than 40 million toll-free numbers. Since January 2017, UUAS members have provided Somos with criminally-used phone numbers, and Somos has worked to have over 100 of those numbers disconnected.