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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**McGruff and FINRA Investor Education Foundation: Tax Season Tips**

*Partners Release Tips To Protect Your Finances and Investments*

**Washington, D.C. — April 15, 2015** — McGruff the Crime Dog, icon of the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation partner to help consumers stay financially secure during tax season. According to the Financial Fraud Research Center, each year an estimated \$50 billion is lost to financial fraud. Additionally, a 2013 FINRA Investor Education Foundation study found that eight in ten consumers are solicited for potentially fraudulent offers.

McGruff often says, “‘Take your time, and get a second opinion,’ especially with regard to your financial well-being,” said Ann Harkins, president and CEO of NCPC. “People over 65 make up about 13 percent of the population but account for an estimated 30 percent of fraud victims. This is due to the fact that seniors, as a group, have a great deal of capital, much of it already invested.”

Each year, an estimated 13.5 percent of U.S. consumers (30.2 million people) are defrauded. The partners agree that consumers reduce the risk of becoming a victim if they learn the tactics of the scammers, heed the tips for identifying a fraudulent offer, and understand how scammers select their targets. The National Crime Prevention Council, home of McGruff the Crime Dog, and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation released fraud prevention videos and PSAs aimed at increasing consumer awareness of the growing trend of financial fraud.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6xNNvJdEW8>

Tips for avoiding financial and investment fraud.

- Be wary of someone who guarantees a high rate of return or claims little to no risk on an investment opportunity. Remember that investing always involves some degree of risk, and there are no guarantees.
- Never make an investment based simply on a sales pitch. Take your time to verify information and get a second opinion.
- Steer clear of complex investment strategies that cannot be clearly explained.
- Do not do business with an investment salesperson who is not properly registered with a federal, national or state regulator.
- Before investing, verify that the salesperson is registered to sell securities. Use FINRA's BrokerCheck, [www.finra.org/brokercheck](http://www.finra.org/brokercheck). And ask for written information regarding the investment that you can verify.

Sharpen your scam-spotting skills:

- Join McGruff in the fight against fraud—[watch and share the videos](#) today!
- Use the FINRA Foundation's Risk Meter to see if you fit the description of an investor's prime target [www.saveandinvest.org/meters/risk](http://www.saveandinvest.org/meters/risk).
- Check the Scam Meter provided by the FINRA Foundation at [www.saveandinvest.org/meters/scam](http://www.saveandinvest.org/meters/scam).
- View the "[Thinking Money: The Psychology Behind Our Best and Worst Financial Decisions](#)" documentary, which reveals the psychological factors behind our financial behavior and provides innovative solutions to get us on the path to financial security.

### **About FINRA Investor Education Foundation**

The mission of the FINRA Investor Education Foundation is to provide underserved Americans with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary for financial success throughout life. The Foundation provides high-quality, easily accessible information and tools to help investors better understand the markets and the basic principles of saving and investing.

<http://www.saveandinvest.org/>, a FINRA Foundation website, offers easy-to-use tools and information to help investors make sound financial decisions and protect themselves from investment fraud.

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### **About the National Crime Prevention Council**

The National Crime Prevention Council is the nonprofit leader in crime prevention. For more than 30 years, our symbol of safety, McGruff the Crime Dog®, has delivered easy-to-use crime prevention tips that protect what matters most—you, your family, and your community. Since

1982, NCPC has continuously provided the American public with comprehensive educational materials, training programs, and effective crime prevention messaging, delivered in large part through its vast network of more than 4,600 state and local law enforcement agencies, crime prevention associations, community groups, foundations, and corporate partners. For more information on how NCPC can be a public safety expert for you or how to “Take A Bite Out of Crime®,” visit [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org).

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