

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard and Certified Senior Advisor Michael Gruley Team up to Protect Michigan Senior Citizens from Predatory Lending, Fraud, Scams, and Crime.

One Week of Free Seminars Offered to Southeast Michigan Senior Citizens as Part of Michigan Aging in Place Week.

(Northville, MI) – Predatory lenders feed on the poor, seniors, and people of color. So do scam artists wishing to trick innocent citizens out of their hard earned money. Because awareness is the key to identifying scams and predatory lending practices, the Michigan Aging In Place Coalition is offering a series of free seminars this week to southeast Michigan senior citizens.

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard is hosting one of the free seminars on Monday, November 8th. “The issue of senior abuse is a growing problem as Michigan’s population grows older,” says Bouchard. In fact, according to the Michigan State Police Criminal Justice Information Center, overall crime is down in Michigan, but crime against citizens over 65 is up significantly. “Most people think they are safe from crime when they are secure in their own home,” says Bouchard. “But the truth is criminals use the telephone as a tool to scam people of their savings, often with devastating consequences.” Sheriff Bouchard will educate seniors on everything from Telemarketing fraud to how to avoid physical abuse. “It is extremely important that every senior citizen in Michigan is armed with the information they need to combat fraud,” says Bouchard.

Another way senior citizens are often exploited is through predatory lending. Historically, predatory lenders have targeted less affluent areas such as the city of Detroit as well as the elderly and minorities, the people least able to defend themselves. “Predatory lending can take many forms,” says Michael Gruley, Certified Senior Advisor and President of First Financial Mortgage in Northville. “From pushing unjustifiably expensive loans on consumers to charging excessive fees for lending services, it’s despicable. But it’s being done in and around the city of Detroit each and every day.” Senior Advisor Michael Gruley will educate seniors on how to protect themselves from predatory lenders trying to steal their home equity. “Predatory lending is a sophisticated form of deception that steals not only people's money, but their dreams for homeownership and their opportunity to build a better future for themselves and their families,” says Gruley. “I want to make sure Michigan senior citizens are protected from falling victim to this crime.

**2004 Michigan Aging In Place Week Presentations and Events Schedule for
Monday, November 8th, 9am – 1pm**

Location: Farmington Hills Community Library
32737 W. 12 Mile Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

“Holistic Legal Planning”

Sanford J. Mall, CSA
Mall, Hamilton and Associates, P.C.
When: 9:30-10:15, Monday, November 8th

“Financial Safety at Home”

Priscilla M. Strakovits, CPA, CSA
Sallan, Nemes, Lyman & Strakovits
When: 10:30 – 11:15

“Preparing Against Senior Fraud, Scams and Crimes”

Sheriff Michael J. Bouchard
Oakland County Sheriff
When: 11:30 – 12:15, Monday, November 8th

“Predatory Lending and Financial Exploitation of Seniors”

Michael J. Gruley
President, First Financial Mortgage Corp.
When: 12:30 – 1:00, Monday, November 8th

The events are being organized by Michael J. Gruley, a Certified Senior Advisor and Reverse Mortgage Specialist with First Financial Mortgage in Northville, with support from the Governor’s Office and the State Agency on Aging.

For more information or to register for these events:

1-800-720-7003

www.firstloans.net or ageinplace.org