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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONSUMER ALERT: NDA FINDS SKIMMING DEVICE AT GAS PUMP IN AURORA

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) is reminding consumers to pay attention at the pump this Fourth of July weekend and always. A card skimming device was found this week inside a fuel pump at a station in Aurora during a routine NDA inspection. Skimming and shimmying devices can be attached to gas pumps, ATMs and other places where people swipe credit and debit cards.

Criminals use skimming and shimmying devices to steal financial information. They continue to find ways to disguise these devices making them difficult to detect. In some cases, criminals install two skimming devices, one serving only as a decoy.

“Weights and Measures inspectors keep current with technology and trends to help them identify skimming devices during their inspections,” said Ken Tichota, the administrator of the Food Safety and Consumer Protection Focus Area at NDA. “Typically, installers of skimming devices install the same style of device in multiple locations across the state during a given period. When one of our inspectors finds a skimming device, photos and the location of the device are quickly shared with the rest of the field staff.”

The skimmer device found at the Aurora gas station was embedded on the inside of a pump so it wouldn’t be seen by station attendants or customers. Card shimmying devices are easier for people to notice as they are placed over the external card reader on the gas pump.

Tichota says there are things that consumers can do to protect themselves from card skimming and shimmying devices, including:

1. Pay inside with cash. If using a card, use a credit card rather than a debit card. If using a debit card, be sure to protect your pin numbers;
2. Use a gas pump nearest to the attendant. Installers of these devices tend to prefer pumps out of the view of station attendants;

3. Check the pump carefully before using. Look for a tamper proof, serial numbered piece of tape over the pump access panels. If the seal has been broken or tampered with, report it to the station attendant; and
4. Monitor financial accounts frequently and report any fraudulent charges immediately.

Through routine inspections, Weights and Measures staff works to verify the accuracy of gas pumps in every community in the state. These inspections are designed to ensure that consumers are getting what they pay for.

“As an extra layer of consumer protection, our staff diligently checks gas pumps for skimming and shimming devices during routine inspections,” said Tichota.

If you suspect a skimming or shimming device, report it to the station attendant immediately.

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