



News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Public Information Contacts: Linda Van Zandt / Joanne Vuoso / Lisa Krueger
908.231.7020 publicinfo@co.somerset.nj.us

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Help Prevent Identity Theft: Come to 'Operation Secure Shred' Oct. 7

SOMERVILLE – The Somerset County Division of Consumer Affairs will be joining the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office on **Sunday, Oct. 7**, during the 5th Annual Law Enforcement and Public Safety Community Day which coincides with the Somerville Fall Fest in downtown Somerville.

As a service for consumers attending the street fair and Law Enforcement Day, the Somerset County Division of Consumer Affairs, courtesy of the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders, is offering a free, on-site, mobile paper-shredding event from **10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** (or until the shredder reaches maximum capacity).

Documents will be commercially shredded safely, privately and properly by trained document-destruction specialists. Staples, paperclips and other items do not have to be removed; however, households are requested to limit material to three boxes per drop-off.

The shredding truck will be parked on Grove Street between High and Main opposite Veterans Memorial Plaza. Document drop-off will be located in the gated parking lot on High Street behind the 40 N. Bridge Street building. Signs will be posted directing people to the drop-off location. Consumers may drop off their material and leave, or stay and watch the process. This service is offered to Somerset County residents. Rain date for Operation Secure Shred is Oct. 14.

Properly shredding personal information is a key deterrent to identity theft. According to the Texas Bankers Association, identity theft is one of the fastest-growing crimes in America.

A September 2003 Federal Trade Commission survey revealed that 27.3 million Americans had been victims of identity theft in the last five years, including 9.9 million people in the last year alone. Last year's identity-theft losses to businesses and financial institutions totaled nearly \$48 billion, and consumer victims reported \$5 billion in out-of-pocket expenses.

For further information, contact the Somerset County Division of Consumer Affairs at 908-203-6080 or consumeraffairs@co.somerset.nj.us.

Robert Zaborowski, Freeholder Director * Denise Coyle, Freeholder Deputy Director
Peter S. Palmer, Freeholder * Rick Fontana, Freeholder * Jack M. Ciattarelli, Freeholder
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