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NEWS RELEASE

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Boston Fed Releases *Identity Theft* Booklet

Boston -- The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston announced today the release of *Identity Theft*, a booklet that complements the Bank's 2001 issuance of the video, *Identity Theft: Protect Yourself*. Addressed to consumers, the booklet describes the dangers posed by identity thieves, what people can do to protect themselves, and what they should do if they discover their identities have been stolen.

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States and the FBI estimates that 500,000 to 700,000 Americans are now victimized every year. When one person's identification, which can include name, Social Security number, or bank and credit account numbers, is used by another to open new accounts, take out loans, or apply for new credit cards, the damage can take months to repair.

The *Identity Theft* booklet describes some common sense precautions consumers should take to protect personal information, shows how to monitor for signs of identity theft, and serves as a guide for consumers whose identities have been stolen. The booklet also has useful contact information for the national credit bureaus, federal agencies that can provide help, and nonprofit organizations that advise consumers and businesses.

The brochure is available, free of charge, from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Consumers can call 1-800-409-1333 to order or can write to:

Identity Theft Brochure
Public and Community Affairs Department
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
P.O. Box 2076
Boston, MA 02016-2076

The publication is also available for viewing online, at the Bank's public web site:

<http://www.bos.frb.org/consumer/identity/index.htm>