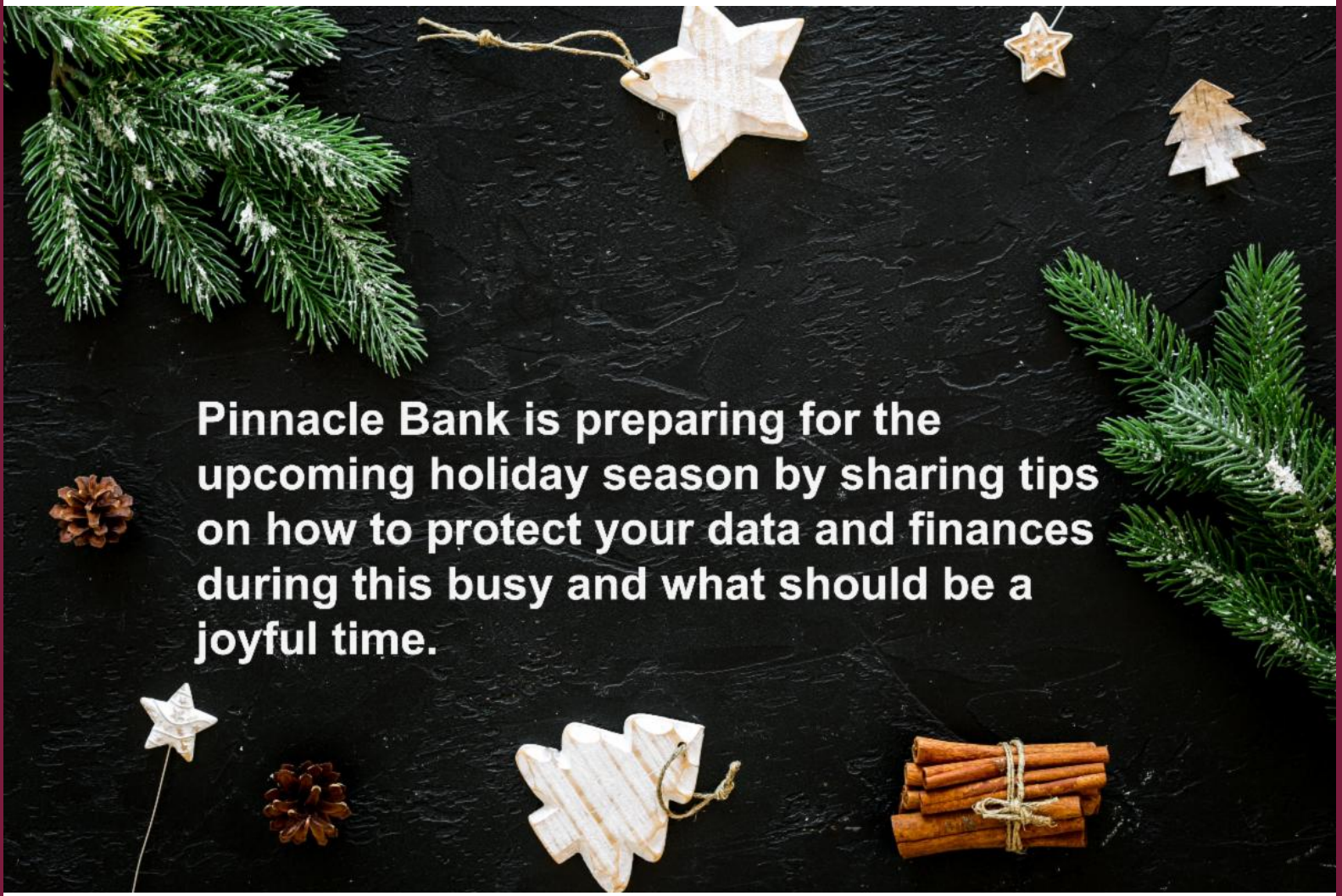


PINNACLE BANK



Pinnacle Bank is preparing for the upcoming holiday season by sharing tips on how to protect your data and finances during this busy and what should be a joyful time.

Popular Holiday Fraud Trends

Below we discuss the most popular fraud trends during the holiday season and provide tips to help you identify and protect yourself from fraud.

Fake Online Stores

Pay close attention to online stores that are made to look like a legitimate website; including, offering deals that seem too good to be true, especially for in-demand items, and social media ads that link you to fake online stores or product listings.

These scams target holiday shoppers looking to buy hard-to-find items at an affordable price. The fake sites can steal your card information or cause you to pay for an item or service that is never delivered.

Holiday Giveaways and Promotions

Scammers pose as influencers or brands offering holiday giveaways, such as cryptocurrency giveaways, on social media.

Victims are asked to send cryptocurrency to unlock their rewards, but the funds vanish.

Bad actors may also promise "guaranteed returns" on cryptocurrency investments, before the new year, or promote exclusive cryptocurrency bundles.

Do not send cryptocurrency to anyone you have not met in person, additionally, do not take instructions from untrusted and unverified sources to access a cryptocurrency ATM.

Gift Card Scams

Gift card scams can involve bad actors scamming you into buying fake gift cards or tricking you into using gift cards to pay for fraudulent items or services.

Avoid online stores or advertisements that sell commercial gift cards at discounted prices. Always purchase gift cards from reputable retailers.

When purchasing a gift card at a retail location, check for physical damage or signs of tampering.

Fake Charities

During the holidays, bad actors seek to take advantage of your generosity through fake charities, including Go Fund Me campaigns.

Before donating money, be extra cautious about selecting a charity. If you are donating online, conduct thorough research, and remember to verify the URL and website for signs of fraud, including misspellings, bad grammar, and no contact information.

For Go Fund Me donations, research the organizer or the group behind the campaign before donating.

Phishing

Bad actors take advantage of the holiday season to scam people via phishing emails or texts and sending them suspicious links.

Be mindful of unexpected communications from your bank, credit card company, and even delivery service companies, warning you that your account has been compromised or request/order cannot be fulfilled.

These emails and texts generally prompt you to click on the fraudulent link provided to log into your account to take immediate action.

If you receive this type of communication do not use the link provided, always contact the company on a known and trusted phone number.



Keep a close eye on your account activity & set account alerts

It is important to review your account information and transactions on a regular basis, but it is especially critical during the holiday season, when you are likely to spend more than usual.

Setting alerts can help you better manage your account while also giving you peace of mind that no one else is accessing your account.

Pinnacle Bank has tools to help you keep an eye on your accounts, including a mobile banking application, and tools to add restrictions on your debit card. Contact us for more information!



Go Mobile

Take advantage of your mobile device's digital wallet, losing or forgetting your debit card is a thing of the past!

Adding your debit and credit cards to your digital wallet helps you process, and track transactions made on your card via your mobile device, as well as ensures that you are using the latest forms of encryption protection; so, no matter if you're in store or buying online, your personal information is secure.



Verify online shopping sites & be cautious of re-sale items before making a purchase

Does a deal look too good to be true? Is the site asking for irrelevant personal information?

Ensure you are purchasing from real and secure sites, and make sure you have the most updated anti-virus software just in case. Remember, browsing a social media platform does not automatically make every ad on it legitimate.

Be cautious of offers and items listed on re-sale sites such as Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace.

When using digital payment such as Zelle, it is best to only send funds and honor requests from known and trusted people.



Protect your debit card PIN

Pay attention to your surroundings when using your debit card in public.

A good way to protect your PIN is to shield the keypad and set a strong PIN – avoid using a birthyear, anniversary or SSN as your PIN.

When following these tips, be on the lookout for ATM skimming devices.

A few ways to detect a skimming device include:

- Checking for alignment issues between the card reader and the panel underneath it.
- When possible, compare the card reader to others at a neighboring checkout station and look for any differences.
- Buttons on an ATM keypad may look thicker than usual or out of place.



Be vigilant of other scams

Remember! While the fraud tactics mentioned above are on the rise during the holiday season, it is important to stay vigilant of anything that may seem suspicious and report it right away.

Bad actors are taking advantage of people by claiming to be from financial institutions, stating that their accounts were compromised, and asking for their personal information.

Anyone who contacts you directly asking for your personal information over the phone, via email or via social media is likely not authorized to do so.

Proactively reach out to your financial institution to confirm if the call or message you received was legitimate.

Taking Action

We hope you will enjoy the holidays without the stress of dealing with fraud. But, if you come across something suspicious, here is what to do:

When appropriate, report the crime to local law enforcement.

Contact us right away if there is a problem! If you believe you have been the victim of a fraud scheme, detected illegitimate activity on your account, or something just does not seem right.

We will work with you to review your transactions to understand the extent of the issue.

Give The Gift of Awareness

Share this newsletter with friends and family, especially seniors and teens, who may be more vulnerable to holiday-themed scams.

To learn more about how to protect you and your accounts click on:

[Online Banking Fraud Prevention Best Practices](#)

Pinnacle Bank

(888) 485-7050



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