Office of the Chief Information Officer

News Release

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COVID-19 Exploited by Malicious Cyber Actors

MARCH 19, 2020 (LINCOLN, NEB.) — Malicious cyber threat actors are capitalizing on the global attention surrounding COVID-19 to facilitate scams, distribute malware, and send phishing emails. The State's enterprise technology department alerts all Nebraskans to exercise caution using the following safe security habits online:

- Exercise caution in handling any email with a COVID-19-related subject line, attachment or hyperlink, and be wary of social media pleas, texts or calls related to COVID-19.
- Avoid clicking on links in unsolicited emails and be wary of email attachments.
- Use trusted sources—such as legitimate, government websites—for up-to-date, fact-based information about COVID-19.
- Look at the email address, not just the sender.
- Do not reveal personal or financial information in an email, and do not respond to email solicitations for this information.
- Verify a charity's authenticity before making donations.
- Look for obvious grammatical errors and be wary of any emails that have implied consequences for failure to comply with demands.

This information was initially published March 19th, in an update from the State's Joint Information Center https://nema.nebraska.gov/press/nebraska-joint-information-center-update. The State continues to monitor alerts and guidance from the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). This alert does not seek to catalogue all COVID-19-related malicious cyber activity. For more information, visit https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/alerts/aa20-099a.

Additional Resources:

Tips for Avoiding Social Engineering and Phishing Attacks:
https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-014
Tips for Using Caution with Email Attachments:
https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-010

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