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AUTHORITY**

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MCCA to Host Customer Data Theft Prevention Summit

Event Aims to Bring Businesses and Experts Together to Strengthen Boston's Data Security

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority will host a Customer Data Theft Prevention Summit on March 5 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center to discuss current trends affecting businesses' efforts to protect their customers' credit cards and data.

This unique event – which will include officials from the state Attorney General's Office, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, the Boston Police Department, the U.S. Secret Service, as well as experts within the payment card industry - is aimed at creating a free, inclusive forum to discuss and inform how local businesses and others can best comply with existing laws and regulations while keeping customer information secure.

Andrew Donofrio, Director of Cyber Security and Digital Forensics for MSA Investigations, will give the keynote address followed by two moderated panel discussions, one with leading experts from the payment industry and the other panel dealing with security and compliance.

The summit is being produced by the MCCA with a focus on local partners - especially in the hospitality, retail and restaurant industries throughout the city - who welcome the more than one million delegates to conventions and conferences each year, as well as tourists and local patrons. Attendees will receive up-to-date information on this growing threat, which impacted the MCCA last year when nearly 300 conventioners had their data compromised at local bars and restaurants. Investigations into that breach are ongoing. The event will also focus on recent large data breaches at retail stores which are believed to have compromised millions of credit or debit cards over the holidays.

"While this isn't a problem unique to Boston, we know firsthand the trials of dealing with a data security breach and the many unknowns businesses face in both protecting and warning customers," said James E. Rooney, MCCA Executive Director. "This summit is intended to gather several key experts in one room with Boston business leaders and others to get the latest information to protect ourselves and our customers, now and in the future. If we take personal data from our customers, we have an obligation to protect that data, but the cyber thieves seem to be staying one step ahead."

Topics to be discussed include:

- Trends and current activities, such as the prevalence of credit card fraud and how criminals are operating.

- What is happening in Boston and Massachusetts?
- Are there developing gaps and exposures that need to be addressed by businesses?
- What business or customer types are most targeted for fraud and theft?
- Business obligations and how you can protect your customers' information.
- The future and how technology can be applied to provide greater protection.

The Customer Data Theft Prevention Summit will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 5 in Room 205 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, 415 Summer Street, Boston, MA. Parking will be available and the full program scheduled to last until noon. Registration is required at <https://customerdatatheftpreventionsummit.eventbrite.com>.

About the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA)

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority owns and oversees the operations of the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center in Springfield, MA and the Boston Common Parking Garage. The BCEC and Hynes have earned a rare gold standard from the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC), making Boston only the fourth city in North America and the 12th worldwide to have been awarded this top standard, the highest certification level a convention facility can achieve under strict AIPC guidelines.

In 2013, the MCCA hosted 254 events at the BCEC and Hynes with 770,000 attendees, generating 462,000 hotel room nights and \$620 million in economic impact. The MCCA is currently in the midst of its Top 5 campaign to launch Boston into the top five convention destinations in North America. For more information, go to www.massconvention.com.

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