



For Immediate Release:

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DURING CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH, NEW YORK STATE LAND TITLE ASSOCIATION HOSTS CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS WEBINAR WITH EXPERTS, ELECTED LEADERS

During Webinar, Experts Discussed Best Practices for Data Protection, Securing Personal Information and Remote Work Digital Protection

New York, October 25, 2021 – During Cybersecurity Awareness Month, The New York State Land Title Association (NYSLTA) today held a webinar on cybersecurity, discussing best practices for data protection, securing personal information and remote work digital protection. The webinar was moderated by Alexander H. Southwell from Gibson Dunn & Crutcher and was joined by various panelists including New York State Senator Kevin Thomas, Chief Technology Officer of HomeServices of America Patty Smejkal, Special Agent Kate McCarthy of the FBI, CISA cybersecurity advisor Rich Richard Jr., and Executive Deputy Superintendent, Cybersecurity Division, New York State Department of Financial Services, Justin Herring.

Now in its 18th year, Cybersecurity Awareness Month seeks to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity across the nation, ensuring that all Americans have the resources they need to be safer and more secure online. As the pandemic caused many to work from home, members of the New York Land Title Association continue to educate and provide resources to members and consumers to help prevent cybercrime, including phishing and malware schemes.

The panelists discussed various ways to defend against ransomware, phishing, and other malicious attacks, including backing up important information offline, conducting weekly phishing tests, ensuring third party vendor security, and viewing various resources online.

NYSTLA members were encouraged to view the Global Cyber Alliance cyber security small business [tool kit](#).

“I thank all of our esteemed panelists for providing our NYSLTA members with vital cybersecurity information and resources,” **said Bob Treuber, Executive Vice President, NYSTLA.** “These experts provided such a wealth of knowledge during this session. I know that all of our members feel much more secure as we continue to navigate the various emerging technology and cybersecurity issues going forward.”

“The goal for this webinar was to raise awareness about cybersecurity issues by thinking through various scenarios NYSLTA members might encounter,” **said Alexander H. Southwell, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher.** “Proactively reviewing preparedness issues, how to interact with regulators, and encouraging questions created a great environment for members to learn and improve their respective cybersecurity preparedness.”

“States need to step up in order to prevent cybercrime and protect our critical infrastructure, consumers, and small businesses,” **said State Senator Kevin Thomas.** “Data privacy is incredibly fast paced, and our laws are outdated--so we need to look critically at this evolving atmosphere to best protect our consumers. I’m thankful for the members and experts who participated in this webinar today so that we continue to raise awareness during cybersecurity month.”

“The single biggest risk to the financial services industry is cyber risk,” **said Justin Herring, Executive Deputy Superintendent, Cybersecurity Division, New York State Department of Financial Services.** “We’ve seen many of our companies disrupted by ransomware, and in 2020 and the first half of 2021, there were more than 70 DFS companies reporting ransomware attacks. I want to thank NYSLTA for having me as we continue to educate, remain vigilant and work together to stop cyber-threats.”

“The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) remains committed to fostering collaboration and cooperation to strengthen the nation's cyber and infrastructure defenses,” **said Rich Richard, CISA Cybersecurity Advisor.** “Education and awareness are vital in building cyber resilience into all organizations to prevent phishing attacks, assess supply chain vulnerabilities, and outside vendor exposure.”

“There are a lot of inconsistencies across various industries in terms of cybersecurity and a wide range of variability in terms of practices that are in place,” **said Patty Smejkal, Chief Technology Officer of HomeServices of America.** “There is definitely more work to be done across the industry and education is an important component along with comprehensive phishing test programs and policies that require multi-factor authentication.”

More information on today's webinar and helpful tips to combat cybersecurity awareness can be found [here](#).

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About New York State Land Title Association

The New York State Land Title Association, Inc. advances the common interests of all those engaged in the business of abstracting, examining and insuring titles, as well as otherwise facilitating real estate transactions and interest. The Association promotes business and general welfare of its members, real estate professionals, homeowners and all who use and benefit from the services of the land title profession.

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