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ALERT!

On Dec. 16, 2010, the *Akron Beacon Journal* reported that the United States Secret Service was investigating ATM skimming at the FirstMerit Branch in Cuyahoga Falls, and on Dec. 17, 2010, it reported that a northeast Ohio branch of Fifth Third Bank was investigating similar scams. A device known as a “skimmer” is attached to ATMs or even gas pumps and skims information from cards inserted into it. There are various kinds of skimmers. Some simply scan the magnetic strip for the information while others include a camera that catches the ATM user entering his or her PIN information.

The *Beacon Journal* reported that the Fifth Third investigation was tipped when several Stow residents had complained recently about money missing from their accounts.

In order to avoid being a victim, consumers are advised to cover their hand when entering PIN information, use the same ATM regularly, use indoor ATMs, and monitor their bank transactions for any irregularities.

If you would like to be added to our e-mail list to receive alerts and other useful information from my office, please call (330) 643-2796.

Please feel free to call my office anytime if there is any way we can assist you.