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Xenia, Ohio, Investigation into Credit Card Fraud Leads to Restaurant

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Abstract (Document Summary)

Xenia police Lt. Daniel Donahue said bookkeeping records were seized Friday from the Fortune House, 131 N. Allison Ave., after owner Yang Chen consented to a search, Donahue said.

Donahue said a credit card skimming device, also known as a wedge, was likely used to capture data from each credit card's magnetic stripes, including the cardholder's name, card number and other information, making it possible for the accounts to be charged electronically. Skimming occurs most often in restaurants and bars when the card is out of the cardholder's sight, he said.

Full Text (322 words)

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Jan. 11--XENIA, Ohio--Xenia police have seized records and interviewed employees at a Chinese restaurant as part of an investigation into credit card fraud that may involve a handheld, information-stealing device.

Xenia police Lt. Daniel Donahue said bookkeeping records were seized Friday from the Fortune House, 131 N. Allison Ave., after owner Yang Chen consented to a search, Donahue said.

Through a translator, the owner said he doesn't understand what happened, but is cooperating with the police. He is concerned about his business's reputation and hopes police make an arrest.

No one has been charged or arrested, Donahue said.

At least \$20,000 was charged to credit cards issued to about 20 Miami Valley residents, Donahue said. After examining credit card records, police noticed the same restaurant among the card holders.

"Every single one had used the debit (credit) card at Fortune House during the month of December," Donahue said. "On each and every one, Fortune House popped up."

Reports of the unauthorized charges began pouring into the Xenia police department this week after the credit card holders received their January bills. Charges on individual cards were as high as \$3,000, Donahue said.

Donahue said a credit card skimming device, also known as a wedge, was likely used to capture data from each credit card's magnetic stripes, including the cardholder's name, card number and other information, making it possible for the accounts to be charged electronically. Skimming occurs most often in restaurants and bars when the card is out of the cardholder's sight, he said.

The devices, which can be as small as cigarette packs and can be acquired for as little as \$100 on the Internet, can store credit card information for later transfer to bogus cards. Donahue said this is the first time his department has

encountered the skimming devices.

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