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Safety Continues Online

We live in a day and age when technology is expanding rapidly. In some respects, this is great news for us to continue making medical, agricultural and other technological advances. But when it comes to our social media and the easy access that many children have to computers, we need to pause and have a discussion.

By using technology and social media sites we have instant access to thousands of people. This is great for networking with business professionals, keeping up to date with community events, and maintaining relationships with relatives and friends.

However, technology also poses a certain degree of danger to our youth. There are some people that will use the innocence of children to their advantage. The opportunity for internet exploitation gives rise to a need to have conversations surrounding how to be safe on the internet.

For example, do not accept friend requests from people that you do not know in real life. I know when I think of catfish I think of the actual fish, but a catfish on the internet is someone who is pretending to be someone else for their own personal gain. The bottom line is that we should be very cautious about who we allow to see our private information online and only accept friend requests from people we know.

In addition to these threats, many kids now face cyberbullying online. Be sure to discuss with your children the importance of privacy and common sense. Putting too much personal information online can leave our young people vulnerable. The kids in our community should also be careful about what they say or send in "private chats," because it is very easy to save them or print them out.

Social media is not the only online concern. We should also be wary of internet scams, especially during the holiday season when a lot of people are shopping online. If a deal seems too good to be true, then it probably is. Be sure to purchase products from legitimate sources, double check reviews, and keep an eye out for other indicators of fraud before placing any online purchases.

I hope your Thanksgiving was filled with good food and quality family time. Please remember to consider shopping local as we head into the holiday season.

As always, feel free to contact my office with questions, comments, or concerns.