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## State's Financial Crimes Intelligence Center Opens In Tyler

**AUSTIN** – The Financial Crimes Intelligence Center, which will coordinate law enforcement investigations into credit card skimmers, officially opened today in Tyler during a ceremony at the center.

House Bill 2106 (87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, regular session) created the FCIC, which will operate as a partnership between the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and the Smith County District Attorney's Office.

The FCIC will coordinate and assist in skimmer investigations with law enforcement agencies in Texas and elsewhere. The center's law enforcement officers also will build and maintain relationships with financial institutions, credit card and debit card issuers, payment card networks and merchants. The Center will develop and provide training to law enforcement and industry partners on identifying and combating credit card fraud.

"The Financial Crimes Intelligence Center is a huge step forward in law enforcement for the protection of Texas Citizens. The Smith County District Attorney's Office is grateful to TDLR and the Texas Legislature for recognizing the need to stop organized crime and fraud at our gas pumps and payment terminals," said Smith County District Attorney Jacob Putman. "This new center will help keep our citizens safe in Smith County and across the State of Texas and enable law enforcement to work effectively statewide."

State Rep. Mary Ann Perez authored the legislation that created the FCIC.

"Card skimming at gas pumps is a rapidly growing problem in Texas. I authored bills to tackle this issue during both the 86th and 87th Legislative Sessions – I am humbled to see it all come together and make a positive impact in our state. Card skimming affects all Texans – chances are you or someone you know has been skimmed at least once. I appreciate all of the stakeholders working together on this issue, and am grateful for the overwhelming support this legislation received in both the Texas House of Representatives and Senate. The Financial Crimes Intelligence Center is the first of its kind, and I am proud to see Texas take the lead on this issue and become a model for other states," she said.

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TDLR regulates motor fuel metering and quality and collects consumer complaints and merchant reports related to credit card skimmers. The Tyler Police Department and Smith County DA have aggressively investigated and prosecuted criminals engaging in credit card fraud related to skimmers placed on gasoline pumps.

“We appreciate the leadership that the Smith County District Attorney’s Office and the Tyler Police Department have provided during the past few years in the fight against credit card skimmers. TDLR is proud to enter the fight and we look forward to working with the District Attorney and the FCIC in the years to come – and we thank the Texas Legislature for entrusting us with this task,” said Brian F. Francis, TDLR executive director.

The Smith County DA will run day-to-day operations at the FCIC, while TDLR will reimburse Smith County for operating expenses related to the Center.

“The FCIC’s sworn investigators are highly experienced, have statewide jurisdiction and can take the investigative lead in any case where that’s appropriate,” said Adam Colby, the FCIC’s Chief Intelligence Coordinator. “We expect the Center to be fully operational in late January, but we’re already working cases around the state and assisting law enforcement and private sector investigators around the country.”

*Note to news media: Any future requests for interviews with FCIC staff should be directed to the TDLR PIO.*

#### About TDLR

*TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 38 business and occupational licensing programs with almost 1,000,000 licensees across the state.*

Visit TDLR’s [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR’s Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

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