September 12, 2003

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of Washington

Chicago Man Pleads Guilty to MSN Internet Fraud

John McKay, United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington, and R. Scott Crabtree, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced that MATTHEW THOMAS GUEVARA, age 21, of Chicago, Illinois, pleaded guilty today to wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343. According to the plea agreement, beginning in late 2000 and continuing until August 2001, GUEVARA operated a scheme to defraud customers of the Microsoft Network (MSN). He first created false email accounts with the Internet Service Provider Hotmail and an unauthorized website with the address www.msnbilling.com through the Internet Service Provider Yahoo! GUEVARA then sent MSN customers email messages, purporting to come from MSN, that directed the customers to the fraudulent www.msnbilling.com website and asked them to verify their accounts by providing their name, MSN account and credit card information. Each time a customer entered the information, the website automatically forwarded it to one of GUEVARA's false Hotmail accounts. GUEVARA used the stolen credit card information himself and provided it to another person as well. GUEVARA is scheduled to be sentenced before Chief United States District Judge John C. Coughenour on December 5, 2003, at 9:00 a.m. (Case Number CR03-378C). He faces a maximum statutory penalty of five years in prison and a fine of up to $250,000.00. The case against MATTHEW GUEVARA was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Cyber Squad. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Floyd G. Short.

For further information, please contact Executive Assistant United States Attorney John Hartingh, at (206) 553-4110, or Assistant U.S. Attorney Floyd G. Short, at (206) 553-2465.

###