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Release Date:
Immediate

NEW ERA COLLEGE SUPPLIES: BOOKS, COMPUTERS AND INSURANCE
WIA Advises Parents and Students to Protect Valuables From Theft

MADISON, August 10, 2007 -- Registering for classes, buying books and leaving home are typical concerns college-bound students face each year. With costly high-tech gadgets now common in student housing, they face an added worry: theft.

Theft is the number one crime on college campuses. According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than 41,000 annual reported burglaries have occurred at and around college campuses in recent years, while auto theft accounts for another 16,000 thefts.

“With portable electronics surging in popularity, many students walk around with thousands of dollars worth of devices in their pockets and book bags,” said Eric Englund, president of the Wisconsin Insurance Alliance. “While insurance may not help retrieve lost data from a stolen computer, it can help recoup the tools necessary to complete classes.”

The Wisconsin Insurance Alliance provides the following advice for parents and students preparing for college:

- If your child will be living in a dormitory, check policy limits on your homeowners insurance. Typically, belongings stored outside your home – such as your child’s dorm supplies -- are covered to 10 percent of your personal property coverage.
- For expensive items such as computers and high-end electronics, consider purchasing a personal property “floater,” or extra coverage for items that can be moved from your home. Another option is to purchase a separate policy for computers and cell phones.

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- Students who live off campus may not be covered by their parents' policy, and may need to purchase their own renters' insurance. Students should consult their parents' insurance professional to see if their homeowners or renters policy extends to off-campus housing.

Additionally, WIA recommends that students leave all unnecessary valuables at home; create an inventory of the belongings that are taken to school; engrave electronic devices with their drivers' license number; and update their auto policy with any changes in mileage driven and vehicle location.

“No matter how safe you play it, always remember to keep your dorm room or apartment locked and don't leave your belongings unattended wherever you are,” Englund said.