

May 6, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Attorney General John Formella
Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Bureau
33 Capitol Street
Concord, NH 03301
[Email: DOJ-CPB@doj.nh.gov](mailto:DOJ-CPB@doj.nh.gov)

Re: Notice of Data Security Incident

Dear Attorney General Formella:

We were recently retained by AAA Energy Service Co. (AAA Energy), a longstanding New England based entity with operations in New Hampshire and Maine. AAA Energy is currently comprised of 71 employees including 11 employees who are residents of New Hampshire. This report is made in connection with what was ultimately determined to be a data security incident (the Incident), the initial manifestation of which was a system lockout first identified by AAA Energy on February 28, 2023.

Following the retention of computer forensic consultants and counsel, it was determined that the lock up resulted from the application of ransomware which has preliminarily been identified as Royal Ransomware.

AAA Energy Service provides servicing of HVAC equipment and related services in Maine, New Hampshire and in Massachusetts.

Nature of the Incident.

As a result of AAA Service's forensic investigation to date, it appears that all users were locked out of the system as a result of malware in place on that date. Forensic efforts have concluded that the threat actor had compromised AAA Service's system as early as December 6, 2022 by exploiting a series of Microsoft Exchange vulnerabilities.

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The system was shut down by AAA Energy's third party data services provider and with the advice of forensic consultants the system was rebuilt and is now substantially restored.

Someone claiming to be the threat actor made contact on or about March 1, 2023 and demanded a ransom. Eventually, AAA Energy learned that files from its system, including from its Data, Archive and Employee directories were released on a site used by threat actors using the Royal malware beginning March 18, 2023.

Review of materials on the system has confirmed that files containing PII including social security numbers for employees and a few individual payees was available for access and thus potentially subject to exfiltration and dissemination.

As detailed herein, AAA Energy is contacting the potentially impacted individuals of prudent steps and resources available to mitigate the impact of any identity theft, and has offered to reimburse for reasonable identity theft monitoring services for the three months. To date there are no known financial losses to individuals resulting from the Incident beyond those attributable to breach response costs incurred or to be incurred by or on behalf of AAA Energy. There is no known impact to separated third party systems including payroll and billing/credit.

New Hampshire residents affected.

Approximately 41 individuals known to be residents of New Hampshire, comprised of current and former employees of AAA Energy, may have been affected by this incident.

Steps taken relating to the incident and prior notifications.

Forensic investigation was completed on May 5, 2023, and AAA Energy will begin contacting those individuals whose PII may have been stolen as a result of the Incident, a group which includes employees and certain former employees and individual payees of the business beginning on May 8, 2023 and continuing.

AAA Energy's response actions to date include defensive and documentation measures recommended by its forensic consultant and notifications to the potentially impacted individuals, notification to the FBI and the Attorney General of the State of Maine in addition to this notification.

A copy of the template communication which is being sent electronically where possible and otherwise by mail, with follow up as warranted, to those individual whose PII was stolen is attached.

AAA Energy's communications identify the nature of the issue, (ransomware exploit/ stolen PII) and advises recipients of responsive actions to prevent or mitigate harm while affirmatively offering identity theft monitoring service

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reimbursement. The communications include a pamphlet and links to governmental and self-help resources and service provider information

In addition to AAA Energy's communication to impacted individuals AAA Energy has invited comments and follow up inquiries from recipients of its messaging.

Contact Information.

AAA Energy's principal, Chad Everett will be the contact point:

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,

/s/ Joseph S. Sano
Joseph S. Sano
Prince Lobel Tye LLP
One International Place
Boston, MA 02110

On Behalf of
AAA Energy Service Co.

JSS/kt
Enclosure

Template Correspondence to Individuals whose PII may have been accessed and/or exfiltrated:

Subject: AAA Energy Services Co., Notice of Data Breach, Protective Measures Against Identity/Credit Theft

Notice of Breach Incident:

On February 28, 2023, we experienced an unauthorized system lockdown to our computer system. We engaged computer forensic services and have determined that personally identifiable information (PII) from our files and other information from our computer system were accessed and copied or otherwise stolen as a result of unauthorized access to our system. Certain of such materials are now available on so called "dark web" sites.

We understand that the PII involved may include among other information resident on our system.

As a result of the forensic investigation, we were advised that the system lock out resulted from the installation of ransomware known as Royal Ransomware.

Since the compromise of our system could have included these or other files where PII may be, you should consider whether other information relating to you and provided to AAA Energy Services could have included additional PII whose compromise must be considered or addressed.

We have not paid a ransom to the criminals responsible for this attack on our computer system, but we have notified federal authorities and are notifying state attorneys general in New Hampshire and in Maine, in addition to the FBI. We have also implemented additional security measures in connection with our computer system and will be considering additional measures and policies to strengthen our system and reduce this risk which faces AAA Energy Services and everyone who uses computer systems and the internet.

What You Can Do To Minimize Your Risks And Impacts Of Identity Theft

The principal risks from stolen PII include unauthorized credit risks and risks to governmental transactions including tax returns and government benefits. Attached to this email is a pdf from the Social Security Administration reflecting governmental resources available when social security numbers have been stolen and/or used.

With respect to risks involving tax filings and refunds we urge you to review information from the IRS (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/taxpayer-guide-to-identity-theft>).

With respect to risks regarding Social Security, we enclose a copy of a pamphlet from the Social Security Administration entitled "Identity Theft And Your Social Security Number."

With respect to unauthorized credit risks, it is recommended that you immediately lock down your credit reports with each of the credit rating agencies (E.g.Ch Transunion, Experian, etc.) if you have not already done so. When locked, no third parties are allowed to make credit inquiries or open credit accounts in your name even if they have your social security number, unless and until you unlock your account for that purpose. Further information on this process is available here:

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/finance/how-to-freeze-credit>

While some commentators believe that third party credit and/or identity theft monitoring is unnecessary if your credit reports are locked, we leave that decision to you and are willing to reimburse the reasonable costs of such monitoring for a period of 3 months for any employee, with copies of the monitoring reporting from the service. For example, we note that Equifax Complete provides such services for 19.95 per month. Other similar reasonable cost services may be used with our prior consent.

Please contact me if you have any questions, or if you receive any information that your personally identifiable information may have been used without your permission.

Regards,

Chad Everett

Service Manager

AAA Energy Service Co.