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Ohio business hit with class-action lawsuit in San Antonio after cyber breach

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A Bexar County man filed a class-action lawsuit on Nov. 2 against Hudson, Ohio-based LeafFilter after his identity was stolen when his information was pilfered from the company's database, court documents show.

The plaintiff, Michael Tilleman, is represented by William Federman of Federman & Sherwood, which has offices in Dallas and Oklahoma City.

In August, Tilleman was alerted by Credit Karma, an online business that tracks credit scores, that an unidentified individual had applied for a credit card from Walmart Inc. through Synchrony Bank, which was a fraudulent transaction, according to the lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas San Antonio Division. LeafFilter's database included a copy of the plaintiff's driver's license, social security number and bank account information.

In October, Tilleman received a letter from LeafFilter acknowledging that a cybersecurity breach had occurred and was told by phone that it impacted about 3,000 customers, according to the lawsuit. Lawyers, who estimated there are plaintiffs in 40 U.S. states and that the case is worth upwards of \$5 million, demanded a jury trial.



FILE PHOTO

A Bexar County man filed a class-action lawsuit against Hudson, Ohio-based LeafFilter after he discovered his personal information leaked by the company was used for identity theft, according to court documents.

An email phishing scheme targeting three LeafFilter employees in August gained access to their email accounts, which contained personal information about Tilleman and others, according to a letter from the company to Tilleman, which was included as an exhibit in the lawsuit. Email forwarding rules were changed for three employees' accounts between April and August this year, which was the source of the leaked information, the letter said.

The company offered credit monitoring for one year to customers, according to its letter.

"Upon learning of the incident, we immediately took steps to secure the accounts, began an investigation and engaged a leading cybersecurity firm to assist with the investigation," Larry Napolitan, chief financial officer at LeafFilter, wrote in the letter.

LeafFilter has offices in Austin, Grand Prairie and Houston operating under the subsidiary LeafFilter North of Texas LLC, records show. It sells gutter systems for commercial and residential buildings. It has more than 220,000 customers across the country, according to its website.

Kristen Mosbrucker

Reporter

San Antonio Business Journal

