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## **ATTORNEY GENERAL ISSUES CEASE AND DESIST ORDERS AGAINST THREE BOGUS "GRANT" COMPANIES**

BISMARCK –Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem has issued three Cease & Desist Orders against bogus "government grant" programs targeting North Dakota consumers.

The first order issued against National Grant Assistance or National Grant Association, run by Eliyya Shukeir of Montreal, Quebec and operating out of a post office box in Champlain, New York. The second order is against Express Grant, doing business as GE International and American Grant Services, run by Roger Samara of Montreal, Quebec and operating out of a mail drop in Champlain, New York. The third order issued against grantforyou.com aka Grant For You and premierbusinessgroup.net, run by Vincent Cataldi in Delray Beach, Florida with a mailing address in Phoenix, Arizona.

In all three cases, the scam is the same - consumers are told that as taxpayers they are entitled to government grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 if they pay a "processing fee" of up to \$349, which will be electronically withdrawn from their bank account. Callers collect consumers' bank account numbers, Social Security numbers and dates of birth, information which enables unauthorized bank drafts and presents tremendous opportunities for identity theft.

"These grant schemes are a growing problem," Stenehjem said, "and truly international in scope, with many of the scammers based in Canada and employing people in India to call into the United States." Grant scammers typically use fake names, false addresses and layers of phone providers to hide their true identities. "We do, however, find them," said Stenehjem. "This office has been working aggressively to let these people know that if they break North Dakota law, we will track them down and expose them for what they are – thieves and liars."

Stenehjem cautions people who receive calls about these or any other grant operations not to provide bank account, Social Security or other personal information. For more information or to report a "government grant" phone call, contact the Consumer Protection Division toll-free at 1-800-472-2600.