

July 25, 2008

STENEHJEM ISSUES WARNING ABOUT “THE GRANT INSTITUTE”

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem is warning residents about the Los Angeles, California Institute for Communication Improvement, doing business as The Grant Institute, an entity providing courses on how to get government grants. Stenehjem is investigating the entity’s failure to obtain a Transient Merchant license for North Dakota sales activity in 2007, and a consumer complaint alleging duplicate charges for services.

“I am highly concerned about this company. I believe The Grant Institute previously has violated North Dakota law, and now it is not responding to requests for information from my Consumer Protection Division. The business has not obtained a Transient Merchant’s License and now it is representing it will hold a seminar that would again be in violation of the law,” Stenehjem said. He has directed the Consumer Protection division to initiate a formal investigation.

The Grant Institute is sending solicitations and accepting registrations in North Dakota saying it will be holding a seminar at North Dakota State University in Fargo August 4-6 but has made no arrangements with NDSU to conduct the presentation. Furthermore, NDSU has no affiliation with the company and has requested the company remove a reference to NDSU from its website.

The Better Business Bureau of Colton, California has received 63 complaints in the last 36 months and has assigned The Grant Institute a “Company Rating F.”

According to Parrell Grossman, Director of The Consumer Protection Division, consumers should carefully research companies that offer courses on how to get government grants. “Complaints regarding some government grant companies raise a variety of concerns about whether the course is beneficial to the attendees. The information may be available from other sources such as the Internet, public libraries, government agencies, and other sources.” Grossman said.

Consumers may contact the Consumer Protection Division at 701-328-3404 or toll-free at 1-800-472-2600 with any questions regarding The Grant Institute or government grant courses.

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