

# STENEHJEM JOINS NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

March 1, 2013

BISMARCK, ND – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem joins federal, state and local organizations and national advocacy groups in supporting the annual National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), March 3-9, 2013, to highlight consumer protection and education efforts. This year's theme is "Dollars and Sense: Rated "A" for All Ages," which highlights consumer education for every stage of life, from grade school to retirement.

"It's never too early - or too late - to learn ways to stay ahead of the conmen," said Stenehjem. "Technology makes it easier for the scam artists to reach out, but it also gives consumers new tools to use to protect themselves. Consumer Protection Week is a great time to remind consumers of the tools to stay ahead of the scams."

"Community education and consumer awareness are the keys to preventing victims of fraud," said Parrell Grossman, director of the consumer protection division. Last year, the consumer protection division gave 36 presentations on scams to schools and community groups across the state, reaching almost 3,000 people. The division publishes a monthly consumer newsletter, Too Good to Be True, addressing common consumer questions, and also issues consumer alerts to warn about current scams. This information, and more, is posted on the Attorney General's website, at [www.ag.nd.gov](http://www.ag.nd.gov).

"Ultimately, the best protection for consumers is to be skeptical, resist high-pressure sales pitches, and avoid quick impulse decisions," said Stenehjem.

In 2012, the consumer protection division opened 912 complaints on issues ranging from internet business opportunity scams to unlicensed transient merchants, and identity theft to home security systems, recovering over \$658,700 for North Dakota consumers. The division had 198 complaints of violations of the Do Not Call laws, resulting in 26 investigations and 16 settlements totaling \$11,500. Stenehjem also issued Cease & Desist orders against 10 individuals and their businesses for violating the consumer fraud laws, and against 3 individuals operating head shops in Mandan and Minot, for selling synthetic street drug alternatives in violation of the state's Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act.

"Before giving out any personal or financial information or wiring any money, first call the toll-free number for the Consumer Protection Division, 800-472-2600, to ask questions," said Grossman. More information about scam prevention is available at [www.ag.nd.gov](http://www.ag.nd.gov). For information about NCPW, visit the NCPW website at [www.consumer.gov](http://www.consumer.gov).

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