

September 17, 2013

STENEHJEM ISSUES CEASE & DESIST ORDER AGAINST DIRECT RECOVERY SERVICE INC.

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem today issued a Cease and Desist Order against Direct Recovery Service, Inc., Ben Thompson and Ria Jones of Anaheim, California, and Shawna Sue Murphy of Orange, California for fraudulent practices in what is commonly referred to as an “office supply scam.” Direct Recovery Service, Inc. is a Cheyenne, Wyoming Corporation.

Stenehjem’s Consumer Protection Division received a complaint that individuals calling from Direct Recovery Services were threatening legal action to collect on a bogus bill for toner cartridges and other office supplies that were never ordered or received, and that during the call, these individuals made false statements about proof of delivery of the phony office supplies in an attempt to get a payment.

“This is a classic office supply scam with an additional twist of threats of legal action to collect on a bogus claim for office supplies that were never ordered or received,” Stenehjem said.

According to Stenehjem, Ben Thompson is an officer of Direct Recovery Services of Anaheim, appears to run the daily business of the company, and claims to work in its litigation department. Thompson purportedly represents the company as a national firm of attorney investors that purchase qualified business-to-business delinquent debt and pursue payment. Thompson, however, refused to provide the legal name of his company or identify its officers.

Ria Jones is an officer or employee who identifies herself as the “Collection Case Manager,” and has made phone calls and sent e-mails to North Dakotans in attempts to collect payment for merchandise allegedly ordered. Shawna Sue Murphy identifies herself in bank documents as President and Secretary of Direct Recovery Services, Inc. and opened a bank account used to deposit payments from North Dakotans.

Parrell Grossman, Director of the Consumer Protection Division, noted that Ben Thompson would not cooperate in the Attorney General’s investigation and did not respond to a Civil Investigative Demand issued by the Consumer Protection Division.

Information about business supply scams and other common scams is available on the Attorney General’s website at www.ag.nd.gov. Consumers who have questions about this scam or other common scams can contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 701-328-3404 or toll-free at 1-800-472-2600.

###