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ATTORNEY GENERAL WARNS ABOUT COPYCAT JOB SERVICE WEBSITE

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem warns consumers to be careful when searching online for jobs or North Dakota employment information. After Job Service North Dakota received several complaints, the agency realized those customers had in fact been led to a copycat website which charges a fee for services that Job Service ND provides free. The official website of Job Service North Dakota is www.jobsnd.com.

“Consumers should be careful to ensure they are using a legitimate North Dakota state agency website when seeking information or services,” Stenehjem said. “A request for payment of fees should trigger extra scrutiny.”

Consumers had complained to Job Service North Dakota that the website was difficult to navigate, not realizing the copycat website, www.jobservicend.com, was not Job Service’s website. In fact, that website is not affiliated with the State of North Dakota or any state government entity. Job Service contacted the Consumer Protection Division with concerns about the customer complaints and some of the links associated with the copycat website. The website domain name is registered with a Canadian entity located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. One of the website links was www.unemploymentbenefitservices.com, where the user was required to pay for information about unemployment benefits.

“It is always a concern when a private entity charges fees for services available free from a state government entity,” said Stenehjem. He advises consumers to access official state agencies through the State’s official website www.nd.gov if they are not absolutely certain of a particular state agency website. The State’s official website contains links to the state agencies.

According to Parrell Grossman, Director of the Consumer Protection Division, questionable websites frequently copy legitimate government websites for the purpose of luring businesses or consumers into paying for information or services available for free from the legitimate government agencies. “We have received numerous complaints about these practices,” Grossman said.

If consumers have questions or concerns about consumer fraud they should contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division toll-free at 1-800-472-2600 or 701-328-3430, or they may obtain information at the Attorney General’s website www.ag.nd.gov.

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