



ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN

ATTORNEY GENERAL WARNS SMALL BUSINESSES NOT TO FALL FOR YELLOW PAGES SCAM

For immediate release

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HARTFORD -- Attorney General George Jepsen Wednesday warned small businesses to be alert for a fraudulent "Yellow Page" scam in which operators at undisclosed locations called businesses to offer free "Yellow Page" listings or renewals, but request bank or credit card information.

The listings are never placed in any directory and although the bogus service is offered for free, businesses may be charged, and in some instances, even harassed for payments. Some businesses provided credit card or bank information under the mistaken belief that information on file with the real Yellow Pages had expired.

"In this economy, everyone is looking for ways to bring in more business. But consumers need to take the time to check out an unsolicited offer for advertising before giving out bank, credit card or other personal information," Jepsen said. The Office of the Attorney General has received 36 complaints about "Yellow Page" fraud since 2009, including seven complaints this year.

Businesses and consumers, as a practice, should never give out such information over the phone, over the Internet or through the mail unless they are absolutely certain they know and trust the company with which they are dealing, Jepsen said.

Anyone who suspects they may have been a target of this scam should file a complaint with the Office of the Attorney General. The complaint form can be found online at <http://www.ct.gov/ag/lib/ag/consumers/consumercomplaintform032011.pdf>. Please attach copies of any relevant documentation. You may also report it to local police and to the Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft Hotline, toll free: 1-877-438-4338; TTY: 1-866-653-4261.

Consumers who believe their bank, credit card or personal information has been compromised, should contact the credit card company or bank; call a credit bureau to place a "fraud alert" on their credit report, get a free copy of their credit report and review it carefully; and finally, consider a "credit freeze," which means no new credit can be taken out in your name and your credit report cannot be released without your permission.

To place a 90-day fraud alert on your account, call one of the following three consumer reporting companies: Equifax, 1-800-525-6285; Experian, 1-888-397-3742; or Transunion, 1-800-680-7289.

CONTACT: *Susan E. Kinsman*, susan.kinsman@ct.gov; 860-808-5324; cell: 860-478-9581
Facebook.com/AGGeorgeJepsen; Twitter.com/AGJepsen;