

Consumer Alert

Office of Consumer Affairs



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: February 6, 2009

Contact: Cynthia Sich, Director
330-643-2879 or 330-643-2470

County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Warns of Online Job Scams

Summit County residents who are searching online for employment are being targeted by internet con artists who are out to get their money. "With increasing unemployment many people are turning to the Internet to find jobs," said Cynthia Sich, Director of the County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs. "Consumers need to be aware of online job scams in order to protect themselves and their money."

There are several types of online employment scams, but one example targets consumers who have posted their resumes on the Internet. The job seekers are contacted by an individual representing a company and are informed that they have been selected to process the company's payments. The individual explains that they will receive checks or money orders from buyers. They are instructed to deposit the checks into their own bank account, withhold a percentage as their pay, and wire or overnight the remaining balance to the business. Later the consumer discovers that the check or money order was counterfeit and they are now responsible to their bank for the amount of money, and that there never was a job.

Tips that a "job offer" may be a scam:

- o You are asked to deposit money into your personal bank account and then wire or overnight an amount to a third party.
- o Checks/Money Orders are made out to you and not the company and sent without any exchange of a product or service.
- o The money is transferred in a way that is difficult to trace; wire, overnight or to a bank in another country.
- o You are told to pay an upfront processing fee.

In addition to becoming responsible for the bad check, the job seeker may also find that they are a victim of Identity Theft. When funds are wired out of the individual's bank account, their account information becomes available to the con artists who may then empty out that account.

REMEMBER, if you are looking for a job there are a variety of free and low-cost resources available to help job seekers in their search for employment, including local and state government job service offices.