

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Announces TOP TEN Consumer Complaints for 2008

County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Director Cynthia Sich today issued the office's annual "Top Ten" consumer complaints for 2008 so residents can see the types of consumer issues that are impacting the county. The "Top Ten" highlights have changed only slightly compared to prior years. Home Improvement and Foreclosure Prevention continue to hold the top two spots since 2006; while new to this list are Debt Counseling/Repair and Health/Medical Service or Product.

During hard economic times, Sich reminds consumers to do their research FIRST before signing a contract, giving out personal identifiable information by telephone or email, giving or using gift certificates/cards (e.g. company goes out of business). Our office, the Ohio Attorney General's Office or the Better Business Bureau can tell you if complaints have been filed against a business and provide you with helpful consumer tips that might save you money or problems down the road.

In 2008, County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs received 267 complaints, fielded around 800 calls for assistance, and recovered \$70,111.81 through investigation and complaint mediation services. In addition, the office's Web site www.co.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm tracked over 28,000 page views by consumers searching for details on a wide variety of consumer topics such as foreclosure assistance, money management, home improvement, work-at-home schemes, telemarketing scams, door-to-door sales, credit repair, and scams targeting seniors.

The Top 10 Consumer Complaints for 2008 with the County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs:

- 1. Furniture/Home Furnishing**
Complaints regarding failure to deliver or refund deposits
- 2. Foreclosure Prevention Service**
Problems with predatory lending, foreclosure recovery scams or mortgage payment disputes
- 3. Home Improvements/Repairs**
Complaints about failure to start or complete a job, no 3-day right to cancel, poor workmanship
- 4. Motor Vehicle**
Problems with purchase or advertisement of new and used cars
- 5. Services (General)**
Grievances about failure to refund or deliver, misleading advertisements
- 6. Motor Vehicle Repairs**
Grievances about motor vehicle repairs performed by shops or dealerships
- 7. Debt Counseling/Repair**
Problems with payments being made or business failure
- 8. Telemarketing**
Complaints about calls stating they have won a prize or lottery, billing for services not authorized, etc
- 9. Collection Agency**
Complaints about harassment, collecting debts they did not incur, unwillingness to verify debt, etc
- 10. Health/Medical Service or Product**
Complaints regarding failure to deliver or refund, misleading advertisements