

Consumer News

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County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Participated in the 2008 Consumer Complaint Survey Report

The County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs participated in the 2008 Consumer Complaint Survey Report conducted by the Consumer Federation of America (CFA), the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators (NACAA) and the North American Consumer Protection Investigators (NACPI), which shows that while consumer complaints went up, the resources to help consumers went down. The survey of 34 state, county, and city agencies from 19 states across America provides a national snapshot of the challenges faced by consumers and government consumer protectors in 2008.

The survey showed that the most common complaints last year involved basic necessities such as cars, homes and credit. Additionally, real-life examples of cases from state and local agencies' files are used to illustrate the top, fastest growing, and worst complaints, and the report provides tips on how consumers can protect themselves in those situations. It also describes new types of complaints that the agencies received last year, how they help consumers in disaster situations, and their biggest challenges and achievements.

When asked what new laws were needed to protect consumers, the agencies made many suggestions, including outlawing debt settlement companies that take fees before providing any services, prohibiting overdraft protection unless consumers affirmatively agree to it and restricting unreasonable fees for such protection, strengthening consumers' rights to cancel contracts and prohibiting mandatory binding arbitration requirements for contract disputes, barring the use of devices and the fraudulent leasing of telephone numbers that allow telemarketers and identity thieves to "spoof" their identities by showing a different name or number on Caller ID.

The complete report is available at the Consumer Federation of America Web site, www.consumerfed.org or http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/consumer_complaints_report_09.pdf.