

Consumer News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 22, 2010



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County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Announces TOP TEN Consumer Complaints for 2009 and Plans for 2010

Summit County residents need to be careful when hiring a home improvement contractor, looking for help when facing foreclosure or financial difficulties, buying a new or used car, and purchasing gift certificates/cards; as these top the list of consumer complaints for 2009.

In 2009, the County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs was able to save consumers \$24,618.06 by way of refunds, exchanges, voided contracts or repairs completed through its mediation and investigation programs. Homeowners saved an additional \$86,989.33 through the office's foreclosure assistance. Staff answered over 870 consumer telephone inquiries, educated residents on consumer protection and budget/money management at 52 speaking engagements or attendance of community events. Additionally, the office continues to inform residents through consumer alerts, consumer news, consumer factsheets and helpful consumer resources at its Web site www.co.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm.

"Reaching out to residents in our community about their rights, where to turn for help with foreclosures, financial struggles, complaints against businesses regarding a purchase or service, and how to avoid scams is a priority of the office," said Consumer Affairs Director Sich. "This year, along with many local credit and housing counseling agencies, legal services, other government offices, banks and many others, the office is planning several "Free" events that will take place throughout the county to help residents learn where to turn for help." *To learn more about the upcoming events or have a speaker present before your organization or business at no cost, contact the Summit County Office of Consumer Affairs at (330) 643-2879.*

Top 10 Consumer Complaints for 2009

- 1. Home Improvements/Repairs** (Failure to start or complete a job, no 3-day right to cancel, poor workmanship, etc.)
- 2. Foreclosure Prevention Service** (Foreclosure assistance provided by the office to homeowners)
- 3. Motor Vehicle** (Problems with the purchase or advertisement of new and used vehicles)
- 4. Restaurants/Bars/Fast Food** (Not honoring gift cards / business failure)
- 5. Foreclosure Rescue Scam** (Misleading distressed homeowners about saving their home from foreclosure)
- 6. Health/Medical Services or Products** (Failure to deliver or refund)
- 7. Collection Agency** (Harassing calls, collecting debts not incurred, unwillingness to verify debt, etc.)
- 8. Sweepstake/Prize Offer/Contest** (Deceptive mail, email or telephone solicitations claiming won money or prize)
- 9. Motor Vehicle Repairs** (Complaints about motor vehicle repairs performed by shops or dealerships)
- 10. Telemarketing** (Misrepresenting services, failure to deliver or refund, no call violations, etc.)