NETWORK NEWS IS A PUBLICATION OF CONSUMER SENTINEL, LAW ENFORCEMENT'S SOURCE FOR CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE.

e FTC has settled its charges against two marketers of bogus work-at-home business opportunities. According to the FTC, these promoters promised Spanish-speaking consumers that they'd make lots of money stu ng envelopes. In one case, the defendant, Zolio Cruz, allegedly told consumers that for $37, they would receive all necessary supplies — including stamped, addressed envelopes — and that they'd earn $1,400 per week for stu ng 80 envelopes. Instead, consumers got an English-language pamphlet, telling them they wouldn't really get paid and how to take out their own ads to deceive others with the same scheme. Read more: . . / /2008/08/ . .

SUCCESS STORY.

Kudos to the District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB) for using the Consumer Sentinel database to snag the perpetrators of an advance fee loan scheme. In December 2006, DISB investigated a complaint involving a caller who told a consumer he was "approved" for a $5,000 personal loan but had to pay a $500 "processing" fee up front. DISB investigators searched Sentinel to develop leads and expand their case. By doing a variety of Sentinel searches, they identified 20 more complaints against the loan company, seven aliases and several company phone numbers — ultimately uncovering more than 800 victims and over $650,000 in losses.

"Access to the wealth of information in Sentinel was crucial to the development of this case," said Gregory Marsillo, Assistant Director of the DISB's Enforcement & Investigations Bureau. "Sentinel's reports transformed one victim with a $500 loss into a multi-jurisdictional, nationwide loan scheme case." Sentinel led DISB — and eventually the FBI — to the alleged scammer and their conspirators. A U.S. Attorney's o ce arrested and prosecuted at least one of the scheme coordinators. at litigation is ongoing; the proceedings are sealed. "Sentinel made the di erence between a complaint that would have been shelved to one that was prosecuted successfully by the U.S. Department of Justice," added Marsillo.

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Re-registering to access the new Sentinel system is as easy as 1-2-3.

Visit Register.ConsumerSentinel.gov. Contact the Sentinel team at sentinel@ftc.gov or by phone (877–701–9595) if you have any questions.

LESHIN LEARNED.

e FTC has a new resource for consumers who bought debt-consolidation services from Randall Leshin, Express Consolidation, or its a liated companies. e consumers who call the line, 866-706-7597, will hear options to transfer or cancel their debt management plans. A court-appointed monitor will oversee the transfer of consumers' plans to alternate providers not connected to the defendants. Consumers also can get more information at the monitor's site, . . or from 1-800-718-5071. Read more: . . / /2008/07/ . .