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MEDIA ALERT

Consumer Protection reminds Utahns to give wisely in wake of recent disasters

“Devastating earthquakes in Japan and New Zealand prompt many to send aid, check charities out with the Utah Division of Consumer Protection first to be sure your donation is going to right place”
(For immediate release...)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, announced today that the Division of Consumer Protection is reminding Utah consumers to check out charitable organizations before sending monetary support in the wake of recent earthquakes and natural disasters in Japan and New Zealand.

“While many of us are looking for ways to help these devastated countries and their citizens, unfortunately there are those who still seek to take advantage of our good deeds through our wallets,” said Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, “We ask consumers to make sure charities are registered with the state to be sure your generous efforts truly help those in need.”

Tips on Giving Wisely

The following tips will help consumers ensure their donations go to a legitimate charity;

1. Donate to charities with a track record and a history. Charities that spring up overnight may disappear just as quickly.
2. If you have any doubt about whether you’ve made a pledge or a contribution, check your records. If you can’t remember making the donation or pledge, resist the pressure to give.
3. Check out an organization before donating. Some phony charities use names, seals and logos that look or sound like those of respected, legitimate organizations.
4. Call the Utah Division of Consumer Protection at (801) 530-6601 to see whether the charity or fundraising organization has to be registered in Utah or log on to:
www.consumerprotection.utah.gov
5. Do not send or give cash donations. For security and tax record purposes, it is best to pay by check made payable to the charity.

6. Ask for a receipt showing the amount of your contribution.
7. Be wary of promises of guaranteed sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution. You never have to give a donation to be eligible to win a sweepstakes.

Additional Resources for Consumers

www.guidestar.org - Guidestar

www.bbb.us/charity - Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance

www.charitynavigator.org – Charity Navigator

www.charitywatch.org - American Institute of Philanthropy

FTC public education materials in English: <http://www.ftc.gov/charityfraud/>

FTC public education materials in Espanol: <http://www.ftc.gov/donaciones>

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