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For immediate release:  
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## **Authorities seek information about woman who stole \$500,000**

(Salem) — The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services and the Washington County Sheriff's Office are looking for help in locating a woman wanted for scamming Oregonians out of \$500,000.

Alberta Denice Neal was indicted for aggravated theft last summer and has violated several securities and commodities laws, according to DCBS' Division of Finance and Corporate Securities. Authorities have not been able to locate Neal since the indictment. The state believes she is staying with family in California and may be continuing to scam people.

A former banker, Neal would meet her victims in Portland-area bars and convince them to give her money that she said she was using to buy foreign currency at a discount from casinos and businesses. She told the victims she would exchange the currency at full price and split the profits. She would make the first few payments — enough to get the victims hooked — but keep asking for larger amounts of money and eventually stop paying.

The thefts took place between March 2003 and January 2005. The 17 victims ranged in age from 35 to 73 and lost \$5,000 to \$273,000 each.

Anyone with information about Neal's whereabouts should call Maggie Green, investigator at DCBS' Division of Finance and Corporate Securities at (503) 947-7853, or Bill Johnston at the Washington County Sheriff's Office at (503) 846-2500.

The Division of Finance and Corporate Securities advises consumers to be cautious when making any type of investment, particularly when people are promising unusually high returns, like Neal did.

"If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," said David Tatman, administrator of the Division of Finance and Corporate Securities. "Consumers should always check credentials before doing business with any investment professional."

To look up licenses or see if there have been any complaints or disciplinary problems involving an investment professional or firm, call the Division of Finance and Corporate Securities at (503) 378-4140 or visit its Web site, [www.dfcs.oregon.gov](http://www.dfcs.oregon.gov).

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