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State agency to host seminars on preventing fraud

Events throughout Oregon will help consumers avoid money-taking schemes

With high unemployment and deflated retirement portfolios, investors are increasingly vulnerable to financial schemes, scams, and sales pitches. Each year Oregonians – many of them seniors – lose millions of dollars through what they thought were great financial opportunities.

As part of its ongoing effort to provide information to investors and help them avoid fraud, the Department of Consumer and Business Services is joining AARP Oregon to host free public forums around Oregon.

“During the current economic downturn, we have seen an increase in financial scams and the marketing of questionable investments,” said Cory Streisinger, director of the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS). “Now more than ever, Oregonians need information to help them avoid the scams and make smart financial decisions.”

The “Take Charge. Protect your Money” forums will include speakers, a panel of experts, and representatives from the DCBS Division of Finance and Corporate Securities, Insurance Division, and Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA), the Department of Justice, AARP Oregon, and law enforcement agencies from each forum location. The locations and dates of each event are:

- Tigard – Summerfield Clubhouse ballroom, 10650 SW Summerfield Dr., Feb. 3.
- Salem – Community Health Education Center at the Salem Hospital, 939 Oak St. SE, Feb. 23.
- Medford – Presentation Hall, Rogue Community College/Southern Oregon University Higher Education Center, 101 S. Bartlett, March 16.
- Bend – The Environmental Center, 16 NW Kansas, April 8.
- Pendleton – Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, April 27.

Each event has two sessions: the morning session is 9 a.m. to 12 noon – with registration, resource tables and refreshments at 8 a.m. – and the evening session is 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., with registration, resource tables, and refreshments starting at 6 p.m.

Although all events are free, organizers would like attendees to RSVP at 1-877-926-8300 toll-free or online:

- Tigard – <http://takechargetigard.eventbrite.com>.
- Salem - <http://takechargesalem.eventbrite.com>.
- Medford - <http://takechargemedford.eventbrite.com>.
- Bend - <http://takechargebend.eventbrite.com>.
- Pendleton - <http://takechargependleton.eventbrite.com>.

For further information on these events, go to www.protectyourmoneyoregon.org.

The Department of Consumer and Business Services has taken many steps to help seniors and other investors avoid fraud and make good financial decisions, including:

- Adopting rules that ban salespeople from using titles such as “specialist” or “adviser” when they have no substantive credentials.
- Taking enforcement action against companies that target seniors with inappropriate products.
- Developing suitability standards for sales of annuities and life insurance.
- Helping seniors and their families understand their rights and options related to Medicare through the Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) program.

DCBS is Oregon’s largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit <http://www.dcbs.oregon.gov> or follow DCBS Director Cory Streisinger on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/DCBSCory>.

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