

Director's Office, 350 Winter St. NE, Room 200, Salem, Oregon 97301-3878

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For more information:
Kevin Anselm 503-947-7498

State issues order against consumer finance lender for exposing clients to identity theft

Noble Finance must cease and desist, reimburse investigative costs

(Salem) - The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services issued a cease-and-desist order against Noble Finance Corporation for failure to protect confidential files at its former Portland location. The department ordered the company to restore any customer's credit that may have been damaged and reimburse any customer's money lost as a result of any unauthorized use of the customer's information.

The department's Division of Finance and Corporate Securities (DFCS) started investigating Noble Finance in 2005 when it was notified that a non-employee attempted to sell a number of Noble's client files to an undercover Portland police officer. The man claimed he found the files in a dumpster behind the firm's Portland location. After DFCS began investigating, Noble Finance hired an outside firm to review its security policies and procedures, and made changes suggested by the firm. The Texas-based financing corporation later closed its Oregon offices and is no longer transacting business in Oregon.

In consenting to the order, Noble Finance also reimbursed the department for investigation costs of \$20,000 and contributed \$5,000 to assist in the production and distribution of a brochure to inform businesses and organizations about record protection requirements.

"Protecting customers' personal information must be a priority for all businesses and organizations in Oregon," said David Tatman, administrator of the Division of Finance and Corporate Securities. "The theft of someone's identity can result in ruined credit history that can take months, even years, to correct."

In 2007, Oregon's legislature passed the Oregon Identity Theft Protection Act that outlines the responsibilities of any business or organization that collects personal data. Civil penalties for violating the new law can be up to \$100,000. The act also gives consumers free or low-cost options for safeguarding their credit files. For additional information on the Oregon Identity Theft Protection Act, call DFCS at 1-866-814-9710 or 503-378-4140, or go to www.dfcs.oregon.gov and click on Identity Theft.

DFCS can help consumers find licensing, registration, and enforcement history information on individuals and companies offering financial services. You can call DFCS toll-free (866) 814-9710, (503) 378-4140 in Salem, or go to <http://www.dfcs.oregon.gov/>.

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The Division of Finance and Corporate Securities (DFCS) helps ensure that a wide range of financial products and services are available to Oregonians and protects consumers from financial fraud and abuse. It does that by licensing financial institutions and service providers, regulating the sale of securities in Oregon,

investigating complaints and alleged violations of financial-service laws, and providing education and other resources to consumers.

The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.dcbs.oregon.gov.