

Attorney general warns of bogus phone solicitations for 'alert'

Attorney General Phill Kline today warned Kansans to be aware of calls from con artists asking for money to help the state's AMBER Alert Plan.

Kline's Consumer Protection and Antitrust Division has received re-

ports from Kansans who have been solicited by individuals identifying themselves as representatives of the "Kansas Police Amber Alert Fund."

The "Kansas Amber Alert Fund" is not a charity registered in the state of Kansas, does not contribute to the

Kansas AMBER Alert Program, and is in no way affiliated with the Kansas AMBER Program.

The Kansas AMBER Plan does not actively solicit donations from individuals or organizations.

Kansans who have been con-

tacted by this bogus charity are asked to get as much information as possible from the caller and notify Attorney General Phill Kline's Consumer Protection and Antitrust division at 1-800-432-2310.

Attorney General Phill Kline

urges Kansans to avoid making donations to charities with whom they are unfamiliar and who solicit contributions over the phone.

If interested, citizens should request the caller send information to them by United States mail and then

verify that the charity is registered with the state by linking to the Kansas Charity Check website through www.ksag.org.

The Kansas AMBER Plan is a partnership between the state's law enforcement and broadcasting communities designed to disseminate information about child abductions to the general public in the shortest time possible.

There have been eight successful AMBER Alerts in Kansas since the establishment of the Kansas AMBER Plan in 2002. For those with questions, call Whitney Watson, coordinator, (785) 296-2219 or e-mail: watsonw@ksag.org

Gardeners warned about planting noxious weeds in yard

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP)—Gardeners shopping for a new shrub or flowering plant should make sure they don't accidentally purchase a noxious weed from a nursery, state agriculture officials said.

The warning comes after two merchants in the last week unwittingly sold noxious weeds, highlighting the need for consumers to

check out a plant's origins before buying, according to the state Agriculture Department.

"Unless you actually identify the plant by the scientific name, it's very hard to tell," said Rachel Seifert-Spilde, a state noxious weed specialist. "A lot of these have three, four or five common names."

North Dakota lists a dozen plants

as noxious weeds, meaning they are difficult to control, spread easily and can harm crops, livestock or other property. Several of the weeds originally were ornamental plants, and some occasionally are still available for commercial sale.

The Agriculture Department has stepped up efforts to educate gardeners about those weeds, Seifert-

Spilde said.

"It's been more concentrated in the past few years because our newer noxious listed weeds — saltcedar and loosteife — are really popular ornamental plants," she said.

The merchants had saltcedar and yellow toadflax for sale but weren't aware the plants are noxious weeds, said Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson.

They were asked to get rid of the

plants, he said.

County weed control agents and nursery owners also are working with state and federal officials to develop an educational brochure that alerts green thumbs to the dangers of noxious weeds.

Conservation program signup continues

The Conservation Security Program sign-up in eight selected watersheds in Kansas will continue through May 27, officials here said today.

"Agricultural producers in the Upper South Fork of the Solomon River who would like to apply can begin the application process online," said Andy Burr, district conservationist, at Colby.

"The first step in participating in the program is to complete the conservation security program self-assessment that is available at your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office or online at <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/2005/csp2005.html>."

The program is a voluntary program that rewards ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of America's natural resources, is the newest program in a portfolio of tools available from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"Participants will be enrolled in one of three tiers in the program,

depending on the extent of the conservation treatment in place on their farm or ranch," said Burr.

"Payments will be based in part on this existing conservation treatment as well as their willingness to undertake additional environmental enhancements."

Tier One can apply to a single field. Tiers Two and Three offer higher payments per acre if conservation standards are applied on the whole farm operation. Tier Three is the optimum level of conservation standards being applied to production lands and other lands.

Record keeping and documentation of actions are important in the program. Records of soil test results, fertilizer applications, water meter records, pasture rotation logs provide a management record.

The self-assessment workbook helps producers identify whether their agricultural operation meets sign-up requirements and addresses minimum soil and water quality criteria. Producers who may not be eligible this year can find out about other programs that can help them achieve a higher level of conservation so that they may qualify for the program in the future.

"It's very important for farmers and ranchers to check this program out for themselves. Even if they enter only one field into the program this year, the agreement with USDA can be expanded later to include other parts of the farm," said Burr.

Farmers in the Upper South Fork of the Solomon River can get further information about the conservation security program at the local conservation service office. Information is also available on the Natural Resources Conservation Services website at <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/2005/csp2005.html>. Sign-up deadline is May 27, 2005.



Andy Burr

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