

Scams come out of the woodwork, fax machine, mailbox, email ...

Dear Attorney General Kline:
It seems that more and more
scams are appearing in my email,
on my fax machine and even in my
mailbox. What are the most com-
mon scams in Kansas?

Dear Kansas Consumer,
I would like to invite you to stop
by my booth at the State Fair in
Hutchinson between now and Sun-
day and discuss this question with
staff from my Consumer Protection
Division. We have produced a new
and very informative brochure for
the State Fair this year. This new
brochure is entitled "Seven Deadly
Scams" and it is designed to educate
Kansans on the scams generating
the most complaints in my Con-
sumer Protection Division.

As you have stated, these scams
have proliferated in the past years.
International investigations have
determined that many of these con
artists operate from outside of the
United States, and especially from
Canada, Nigeria and Central
America. We have received reports
from Kansans who have, sadly, wire
transferred funds to all of these ar-
eas, never to receive the benefits
promised.

Benjamin Franklin's sage advice
is as relevant today as it was 200
years ago: An ounce of prevention
is worth a pound of cure. The Seven
Deadly Scams was written to give
Kansans, in one reading, the ounce
of prevention needed to inoculate
them and their loved ones from the
seven most common scams re-
ported to my office.

Here are the Seven Scams dis-
cussed in this informative brochure:
Money for Nothing Scams
Unfortunately, many Kansans
have lost hundreds or even thou-
sands of dollars chasing promises of
government grants, sweepstakes
prizes, lottery winnings, secret for-
eign funds or recovery of long lost



Phill Kline

• Consumer Corner

property. The hapless victim is usu-
ally directed to wire or direct de-
posit funds out of the country to get
the process started.

Lookalike Scams

Con artists often deceive their
targets by mimicking legitimate
businesses or charities. Be certain
that the charity you give money to
is a bonafide charity. Realize that
all that glitters is not gold. Too many
con artists, and especially online
con artists, deliver goods far differ-
ent than what was advertised. In the
case of pharmaceuticals such a mis-
take could prove deadly.

Buying and Selling Scams

Classified ads on the internet and
even in Kansas newspapers are be-
coming a hunting ground for con
artists. Some pose as sellers, offer-
ing a great deal on some popular
item. Others pose as buyers, offer-
ing to pay more than what is asked.
The scam sellers never deliver the
goods, the scam buyers send coun-
terfeit checks or money orders and
trick Kansans into passing the bo-
gus paper at the bank.

Biz Op Scams

The standard business opportu-
nity scams of generations past (such
as envelope stuffing, chain letters,
billing centers or vending machine
routes) are quickly being replaced
by scams offering riches for web
surfing, data processing or online
marketing or telemarketing. Real-
ize that much of the money to be
made in such areas is made by dup-
ing others to attend endless semi-
nars, pay outrageous prices for web

page hosting, or agree to sign up
countless friends and family for
unnecessary and overpriced online
services.

Billing and Marketing Scams

Telephone companies sometimes
allow other telecommunications
firms to post items on their billing
statements in order to consolidate
billing and minimize costs. Thus,
even a legitimate telephone bill can
seek payment for services that the
consumer did not order.

Such false billing is called "cram-
ming." Unscrupulous
telemarketers and others have been
known to switch long distance car-
riers without the express permis-
sion of the consumer, a practice
known as "slamming."

Informational Scams

Your personal information is now
a hot commodity on the world mar-
ket. Your social security number,
credit cards, checking account
numbers, driver's license and other
items of interest can bring hundreds
of dollars on the black market.
When they are sold in such manner
the result is identity theft.

Front Door Scams

My Consumer Protection Divi-
sion has taken enforcement action
against con artists selling asphalt
paving, tree trimming, magazines,
lightening rods, home remodeling,
vacuums, frozen meat and cooking
utensils door to door. While it must
not be said that every door to door
sale in Kansas is a scam, our Divi-

sion receives many complaints
from Kansans who believe that they
were "taken" by a door to door
salesman.

The new brochure contains much
more detail than can be shared in
this column, including steps that
you should take to protect yourself
and loved ones from the con artists
casting lures into our great State.
Our best defense against the Seven
Deadly Scams is in recognizing
them and realizing how they are
used to separate Kansans from their
hard earned cash.

Please help me protect Kansans
from con artists and scams by order-
ing copies of this new brochure to
pass around at civic events, social
gatherings and other locations
where the good people of Kansas
interact.

You can obtain copies of this new
brochure to share with friends and
families by dropping by the Con-
sumer Protection booth at the State
Fair (in the Sunflower building) or
by calling us toll free, 1-800-432-
2310.

To learn more about these Seven
Deadly Scams call out Consumer
Information Line at (785) 296-2424
and listen to the messages recorded
in category one.

*Editor's note: Attorney General
Phill Kline offers this public service
to help people avoid becoming vic-
tims of consumer fraud. Although
some of the details have been
changed, the cases appearing in
this column are based on actual
complaints or questions.*

*For further information or to file
a complaint, please write Attorney
General Phill Kline, Consumer
Protection Division, 120 SW 10th
Ave., Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call
the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-
800-432-2310.*

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Weather hurts olives

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — The
California orchards that produce
nearly all domestic olives were
hammered by harsh weather this
year, leaving growers with the
smallest harvest in 25 years.

The hit to the state's \$59 million
industry will likely drive up prices
and dig into processors' stockpile of
canned olives, said Adin Hester,
president of the Olive Growers
Council.

"We won't see olives disappear-
ing from shelves, but prices will
probably go up. The inventory
that's remaining has suddenly be-
come more valuable," he said.

Mid-September marks the begin-
ning of the olive harvest, a time
when tree limbs usually droop
heavy with fruit. But this year, many
farmers are reporting lighter than
average crops. Some have orchards
so sparse, they will not bother to
harvest.

"We entered the year expecting
about three tons per acre," said
farmer Dan Dreyer, whose family
has grown olives for 50 years in
Tulare County, the top olive-pro-
ducing region in the country.

"With the cold snap we thought,
'OK, it'll be smaller.' Then the rains
came. Then heat. We kept lowering
our estimate until we realized we
weren't going to have anything," he
said.

In Northern California, buds that
grew during an unusually warm
January were damaged by a cold

snap the following month. Counties
such as Tehama and Glen reported
near total losses.

In the San Joaquin Valley, storms
knocked blossoms off the trees and
rain soaked pollen into the ground.

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Former Texas governor Ann Richards dies

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Two
years before she was elected gov-
ernor of Texas, Ann Richards elec-
trified the 1988 Democratic Na-
tional Convention with a keynote
speech in which she joked that the
Republican presidential nominee,
George H. Bush, had been "born
with a silver foot in his mouth."

A longtime champion of
women and minorities in govern-
ment who was serving at the time
as Texas state treasurer, she won
cheers when she reminded del-
egates that Ginger Rogers did ev-
erything Fred Astaire did, "only
backwards and in high heels."

Richards, who died Wednesday
at 73 after a battle with esophageal
cancer, ended her lone term as
governor with a 1994 defeat to
George W. Bush, who not only
bested his father's silver-haired
critic but went from the governor-
ship to the presidency.

A homemaker before she en-
tered politics, Richards cracked a
half-century male grip on the
governor's mansion and cele-
brated by holding up a T-shirt that
showed the state Capitol and read:
"A woman's place is in the dome."

She told an interviewer shortly
before leaving office, "I did not
want my tombstone to read, 'She
kept a really clean house.' I think
I'd like them to remember me by
saying, 'She opened government
to everyone.'"

Whether or not she succeeded at
that, there was no question she
cracked open the door.

As governor, Richards ap-
pointed the first black as a Univer-

sity of Texas regent, the first crime
victim to the state Criminal Justice
Board, the first disabled person to
the human services board and the
first teacher to chair the State Board
of Education. Under Richards, the
fabled Texas Rangers pinned stars
on their first black and female offi-
cers.

Ron Kirk, the black former
mayor of Dallas, said Richards
helped him get his first political in-
ternship during a state constitu-
tional convention in 1974 and later,
as governor, made him secretary of
state.

"She set the table so somebody
like me could become mayor of
Dallas," Kirk said.

She also polished Texas' image,
courted movie producers, cam-
paigned for the North American
Free Trade Agreement with
Mexico, oversaw a doubling of the
state prison system and presided
over rising student achievement
scores and plunging dropout rates.

Throughout her years in office,
her popularity remained high. One
poll put it at over 60 percent the year
she lost her re-election bid to Bush.

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