Apr 23, 2020

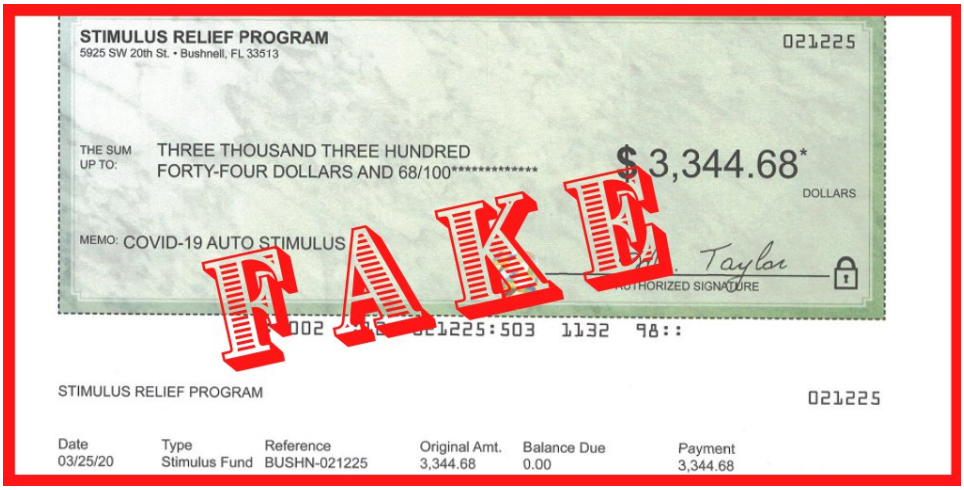
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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Marketing Company Sued for Fake COVID-19 Stimulus Checks



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Consumer Protection Division today filed a legal complaint and motion for temporary injunction against an advertising company, operating in Tampa, for mailing used car promotions disguised as COVID-19 stimulus checks. Traffic Jam Events, LLC and its owner David J. Jeansonne, II allegedly sent the deceptive mailers to more than 35,000 Florida consumers to attract them to an automotive tent sale taking place between March 27 through April 5 in Bushnell, Fla. The mailer also included a simulated check of more than $3,000 appearing to represent funds available from a government stimulus program.

In response to consumer complaints related to the COVID-19 mail piece, the Consumer Protection Division opened an investigation against Traffic Jam Events and Jeansonne, as well as the auto dealer that supplied the automobiles for the tent sale, MK Automotive, Inc. d/b/a New Wave, and its owner, Michael Kastrenakes. The owner of the dealership is cooperating with the investigation and has entered an assurance of voluntary compliance with the Attorney General's Office.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This type of deceptive marketing is completely unacceptable and is even more outrageous during these challenging times. These marketing ploys prey on people's desperate anticipation of stimulus assistance and falsely suggest that there is government stimulus funding for auto purchases. These misleading practices will not be tolerated, and if anyone tries to take advantage of this crisis and the legitimate financial assistance available for those in need, my office will hold you accountable."

The Attorney General's complaint alleges Traffic Jam Events organizes auto tent sale events at

various locations throughout Florida and solicits consumers to attend these tent sales through direct mailers sent to Florida consumers. The fake COVID-19 stimulus mailers were sent to consumers in an oversized envelope stating that the contents were urgent and important COVID-19 economic stimulus document were enclosed. The envelope contained a document claiming to be a notice and an image of a check purporting to come from the Stimulus Relief Program.

The notice referenced that relief funds and other incentives were available at the tent sale, and that consumers must claim the incentives during the temporary 10-day sale. The mailer also stated that the Automotive Stimulus Program would include hundreds of good quality, clean cars, trucks, vans and SUVs from participating dealerships in the area.

Part of the notice is copied below:


URGENT: COVID-19 ECONOMIC AUTOMOTIVE STIMULUS PROGRAM
RELIEF FUNDS AVAILABLE • ALL PAYMENTS DEFERRED FOR 120 DAYS

Eligible Dates:
March 27th thru
April 5th, 2020

COVID-19 STIMULUS (INDIVIDUAL)
NOTICE NO. FB02-021225-096781

DATE: 03/25/20
NOTICE NO: FB02-021225-096781
ACCOUNT TYPE: COVID-19 STIMULUS (INDIVIDUAL)
DESCRIPTION: URGENT NOTICE - READ IMMEDIATELY

Along with the legal complaint, the Attorney General's Office filed a motion for temporary injunction to enjoin the defendants from making false and deceptive representations regarding the COVID-19 stimulus program. The Attorney General's Office is also seeking equitable relief, civil penalties and fees for violating Florida's Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act.

MK Automotive and its owner are cooperating with the investigation and have entered an assurance of voluntary compliance, agreeing to cease using Traffic Jam Events in conjunction with the sale of its automobiles, and to pay $10,000 toward consumer restitution and a $1,000 civil penalty.

To view the complaint, click here.

To view the motion for temporary injunction, click here.

To view the AVC with MK Automotive and Michael Kastrenakes, click here.

Attorney General Moody also recently released a Consumer Alert warning Floridians about potential scams targeting stimulus payments. To view the alert, click here.

To view previous Consumer Alerts about emerging COVID-19 related scams, click here.

Anyone who encounters a coronavirus stimulus package scam or any other types of COVID-19 fraud, should contact the Florida Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or

MyFloridaLegal.com.