Aug 5, 2019

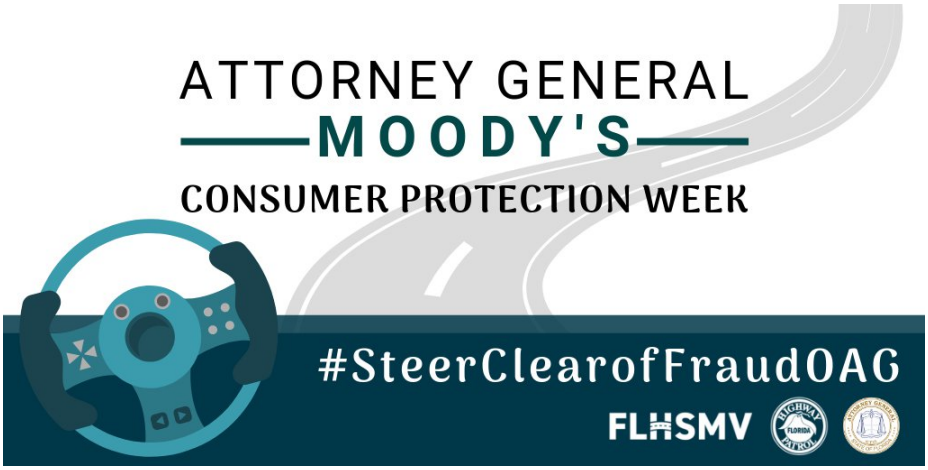
Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody and FLHSMV Launch #SteerClearOfFraudOAG Campaign



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles today launched the #SteerClearOfFraudOAG campaign. The weeklong consumer awareness campaign is designed to warn Florida drivers about various types of automotive fraud. To kick off the campaign, leadership from FLHSMV joined Attorney General Moody in Jacksonville to announce more than a million dollars in restitution for Florida drivers whose liens were not timely paid off on vehicles traded into the dealership.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “We are shifting into high gear to protect Florida drivers from all types of automotive fraud. Today, we announced more than a million dollars in restitution for Florida drivers who were sold cars with outstanding liens, and all week long we will be reaching out directly to drivers via social media to let them know how to avoid automotive fraud and what to do if they fall victim to deceptive practices.”

FLHSMV Executive Director Terry L. Rhodes said, “Through the licensing and regulation of dealerships in Florida, the department is committed to ensuring when a customer walks into a dealership to buy a car, they are met with a fair, transparent and honest car buying experience. I appreciate Attorney General Moody for championing the rights of consumers and holding those who engage in deceptive practices accountable.”

Attorney General Moody and FLHSMV will be reaching out directly to Florida drivers this week via social media with consumer tips and resources. The state agencies will provide information about odometer rollbacks, auto repair fraud, car contracts, tag renewals and more.

Apart from fighting fraud, the Attorney General’s Office also enforces the state’s Lemon Law.

Since the program's inception in 1989, the Attorney General's Office has recovered more than $476 million in value for Florida drivers through Lemon Law arbitration. The #SteerClearOfFraudOAG campaign will include more information about the Lemon Law program.

Follow the campaign online at Twitter.com/AGAshleyMoody and Twitter.com/FLHSMV.

Today's million-dollar restitution announcement followed a Consumer Protection investigation by Attorney General Moody's Office. The investigation has led to an agreement with Riverside Chevrolet LLC of Jacksonville and its owner, Andrew Ferguson. As a result of the investigation and litigation filed by the Attorney General, Riverside Chevrolet LLC will pay more than $1 million in consumer restitution. The filed suit accused the car dealership of not paying off previous liens on cars that were traded-in, failing to pay sales taxes to the state and failing to pay employee withholding taxes.

As a result of the investigation, Riverside Chevrolet LLC has agreed to pay consumer restitution of $1,215,219 by paying off the outstanding liens on vehicles traded in to Riverside Chevrolet LLC by consumers between Aug. 2017 and Aug. 2018 that were not promptly paid off by the dealership. At least 17 of the affected consumers were seniors, with liens valued collectively at $295,000 that were satisfied. Riverside Chevrolet LLC also must pay $235,000 in civil penalties to the state, with over $58,000 of the penalties imposed for violations involving seniors, and $15,000 for the Attorney General's attorney's fees. The agreement also includes a permanent injunction barring Andrew Ferguson from owning, operating, or managing an automobile dealership in Florida at any time in the future.

To view the Riverside Chevrolet LLC complaint, click here.

To view the Final Judgment, click here.

Riverside Chevrolet LLC is now under new ownership. The new owners fully cooperated with the Attorney General's investigation.