Date July 08, 2022

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - July 8, 2022



This week, I kicked off our Summer Scams Series to protect Floridians and our millions of visitors.
Summer is a popular time to travel, move and undertake home improvement projects. Consumers can spend large amounts of money on these ventures. Meanwhile, scammers follow the money and develop schemes to exploit the seasonal demand.

Our first Consumer Alert of the series warns about vacation rental scams.

Fake ads for rental properties are all over the internet. Responding to these ads can cost consumers money and leave them stranded with no place to stay.

To avoid vacation rental scams:

- Request additional pictures of the property;
- Conduct a reverse image search to see if photos of the property are linked to multiple websites;
- Read reviews of the rental company; and

- Never leave a rental company’s platform to pay a deposit through another website.

For more information about vacation rental scams and to follow our Summer Scams Series, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert, and as always stay safe, Florida.



In The News

Don't get burned: Tips to avoid by becoming a summer vacation rental scam victim, CBS 4 Gainesville

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Florida’s Attorney General sends out warnings for vacation rental scams, WINK News

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AG’s Summer Scam Series kicks off with rental scam awareness., ABC 7 Sarasota

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Florida’s seniors should be on the lookout for HVAC-repair scams, Villages News

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How to spot & avoid A/C repair scams, News 4 JAX

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FTC, Florida Attorney General file complaint to shut down COVID-19 relief scam, CBS 12 News

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Ashley Moody, FTC Want to Shut Down COVID-19 Relief Scam Targeting Small Businesses, Florida Daily

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Louis Bruno Customers May Have Financial Relief Coming, Southwest Florida Online News

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Moody Announces Prison Sentence for Fraudster, The Floridian

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Protecting Floridians

Attorney General Moody Secures Commitment of More Than $1 Million in Consumer Relief for Victims of Predatory HVAC Company



Attorney General Ashley Moody secured potential consumer relief of more than $1 million to customers of an HVAC company that allegedly engaged in predatory sales and service practices. This is following an action filed by Attorney General Moody's Consumer Protection Division against Louis Bruno and his business Bruno, LLC, known as Bruno Total Home Performance and Bruno Air Conditioning, for alleged aggressive and deceptive sales practices that resulted in significant financial harm to Florida consumers. The majority of the impacted customers were seniors—including some living on fixed incomes. The deceptive practices involve alleged conduct, such as upselling unnecessary HVAC systems and setting up financing agreements with terms and liens on homes that consumers did not understand.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "We are securing relief valued at more than a million dollars for consumers who were taken advantage of by alleged deceptive HVAC sales tactics. This is an important resolution for hundreds of consumers, most of them seniors, who reported that they were preyed upon by the defendants." Read More



harged $62,000 to

Attorney

General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a multiyear prison sentence for a defendant who used stolen personal information to defraud a senior out of nearly $62,000. James Fedrick previously pleaded guilty to organized fraud and unlawful use of personal identification information. Fedrick and a co-defendant, who is currently at large, used the victim's PII to trick a bank into sending a replacement credit card to Fedrick—who then racked up thousands of dollars in charges.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The defendant worked with an accomplice to unlawfully obtain a credit card. They then proceeded to rack up more than $60,000 in fraudulent charges on a senior's account. Now, because of the diligent efforts of law enforcement and my Statewide Prosecutors, the defendant will spend years in prison and is being ordered by the court to pay more than $60,000 in restitution and fines." Read More