



**For Immediate Release**  
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**\*\*\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\*\*\***

### **MADIGAN ALERTS FANS TO GUARD AGAINST ROSE BOWL SCAMS**

Chicago - Attorney General Lisa Madigan today urged fans purchasing tickets and making travel arrangements to attend the 2008 Rose Bowl to exercise caution and be wary of last-minute bargains.

“ Illinois fans should be on the lookout for fraudulent ticket and travel scams,” Madigan said. “As the bowl season approaches, there are con artists ready to take advantage of fans who want to join in the festivities.”

Madigan offered the following tips and information regarding ticket sales and travel arrangements.

#### **TICKETS**

Madigan said fans attempting to purchase tickets online from a third party may run the risk of receiving a counterfeit ticket or no ticket at all. Consumers should follow several guidelines when considering ticket deals:

- Most importantly, consumers should never wire payment to a seller for any reason. Buyers are sometimes told that they will receive tickets after wiring money to an unknown seller. In many cases, the consumer will end up as a victim of fraud.
- If dealing with a ticket broker, determine whether the broker is a member of the National Association of Ticket Brokers ([www.natb.org](http://www.natb.org)) and the Better Business Bureau ([www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)). Both organizations promote ethical business conduct.
- If dealing with an Illinois ticket broker, contact the Illinois Secretary of State's Index Department in Springfield to ensure that the broker is properly registered. Illinois law requires ticket brokers meet certain requirements such as having a toll-free phone number and maintaining a consumer rebate fund.
- When buying tickets in person from a stranger, avoid paying cash in case the tickets may be counterfeit. Consumers should deal only with a seller who accepts credit card payments or other secure payment methods. Consumers are urged not to buy tickets from an unsecured Web site. Consumers also should be wary of online escrow sites, especially those

recommended by a seller. If an escrow site is suggested, the consumer should independently investigate whether the site is legitimate.

## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Madigan said the Aviation Consumer Protection Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation has established rules for special-event travel package promoters. These rules require that tour operators who market college bowl packages that include tickets to the game in conjunction with airfare must either have already purchased the tickets or have a written contract for the tickets before advertising a package.

This "Truth in Ticketing" rule also requires that companies pay full refunds to consumers if they sell a travel package that includes game tickets and airfare, but fail to provide the game tickets. These refunds must cover the full price paid for the package, including airfare and hotel rooms. The rule also allows consumers to obtain full refunds if promoters increase the price of the package by more than 10 percent after consumers have paid and prohibits price increases during the last 10 days before the departure date.

Fans should purchase travel packages from providers they have used in the past or ask family or friends to recommend a company that they trust. Madigan said fans should be skeptical if they cannot reach a person on the phone to answer questions or if the company does not give its street address.

Consumers also can contact Madigan's office to inquire if there is a history of complaints on file regarding the business.

Additional tips include:

- Make sure that tickets to the game are included in the travel package.
- Get all information about the travel package in writing and carefully read all of the terms and conditions of the travel package before purchasing the trip, including the total price as well as any cancellation and change penalties.
- Purchase the travel package with a credit card. This will give consumers the ability to dispute a charge if the promoter does not fulfill all of its promises.
- Be careful of mail, fax and telephone solicitations offering Rose Bowl travel packages.
- Call the travel promoter a few days prior to the departure date to confirm reservations.
- Finally, consumers should use extreme caution and confirm as many of the package's details as possible prior to purchase.

Consumers who believe that they have been cheated by an unscrupulous travel promoter are urged to contact Madigan's Consumer Fraud Hotline at 1-800-386-5438 (TTY: 1-800-964-3013) to report the incident and file a consumer complaint. Other helpful travel links include:

Illinois Attorney General Fact Sheet: Things You Should Know About Travel

<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/consumers/travel.pdf>

American Society of Travel Agents

<http://www.astanet.com>

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