



February 17, 2010

MADIGAN SUES EVANSTON ONLINE MARKETER FOR CREDIT CARD CRAMMING***Attorney General Alleges Firm Fraudulently Charged Consumers Seeking
"Free Trial" Offers***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court against an online marketing firm based in Evanston, Ill., for "cramming" consumers' credit cards with unauthorized charges for supposedly "free trial" offers for a range of products, including coffee, posters and jewelry.

"We've received an extraordinary number of complaints from consumers who believed they were signing up for free items but wound up with unauthorized charges from this company," Madigan said. "Because of cases like this, it's important that consumers carefully review their monthly credit card statements to ensure they're not being unexpectedly billed."

Madigan's complaint alleges that defendants Peel, Inc., and its President Brian Dale sell products online at dozens of Web sites, including seattlecoffeedirect.com, metroroasters.com, posterpass.com and shopdani.com. The company markets its products using "free trial" offers and requires consumers to provide their billing information purportedly to cover shipping and handling fees for the supposedly free merchandise. However, within days of signing up for a free trial, consumers begin receiving unauthorized charges ranging from \$19.99 to \$49.99 on their credit cards.

Further, Madigan's complaint alleges that if consumers are able to reach Peel's customer service, the company allegedly promises to stop charging consumers but fails to do so. Consumers continue to receive unauthorized charges on their credit cards. Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau and the Better Business Bureau have received more than 2,300 complaints against Peel and its affiliated Web sites.

Madigan's suit alleges the defendants violated the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act by placing unauthorized charges on consumers' credit card bills. The suit seeks a permanent injunction barring the defendants from doing business in Illinois, restitution for consumers, civil penalties of \$50,000 for violating the Consumer Fraud Act, and an additional \$50,000 for each violation committed with the intent to defraud.

Assistant Attorney General Adam Sokol is handling the case for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau.

To file a complaint with Madigan's office, consumers can download a consumer complaint form from the Attorney General's Web site at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov or call the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline at:

Chicago Consumer Fraud Hotline: 1-800-386-5438

Springfield Consumer Fraud Hotline: 1-800-243-0618

Carbondale Consumer Fraud Hotline: 1-800-243-0607

Spanish Language Hotline: 1-866-310-8398

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