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### MEDIA ALERT

#### **Consumer Protection asks Utahns to check charities after Haiti earthquake** **(For immediate release...)**

**SALT LAKE CITY, Utah** - Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Department of Commerce, announced today that the Utah Division of Consumer Protection is reminding consumers to be careful when donating to charities or other groups in connection with the recent earthquake in Haiti. The Division recently sent a warning letter to an unregistered charity in Utah who is reportedly soliciting donations on behalf of Haitian earthquake victims without a permit. Charities or non-profits who solicit donations in Utah must be registered with the Division of Consumer Protection according to *the Utah Charitable Solicitations Act*.

“Haiti’s devastating earthquake has touched the hearts of many Utahns who want to help those in need. The Division of Consumer Protection is asking citizens to be smart about who they give their money to so it goes to registered organizations and not in fraudster’s pockets,” said Francine A. Giani.

The Division of Consumer Protection offers the following tips to help consumers avoid charity scams;

- Do not reply to unsolicited e-mail (SPAM) messages and do not click on any links within unknown emails.
- Be wary of people claiming to be officials who are asking for e-mail donations.
- Only open email attachments from people you know. Attachments may contain viruses that can impair your computer.
- Never give out personal or financial information over the phone or through an email which could result in identity theft.

For a complete list of registered charities in Utah, log on to the Utah Division of

Consumer Protection website at;

<http://consumerprotection.utah.gov/consumerinfo/lists.html>

Consumers may also contact the Division of Consumer Protection at (801) 530-6601.



For more information contact:

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