

NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Carolina Consumer Agency Reports Banner Year for Consumer/Business Funds Recovery

Columbia, SC – The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) recovered nearly \$2.3 million for South Carolina consumers and saved more than \$132 million for businesses during Fiscal Year 2007-2008, according to end-of-year reports compiled by staff members.

The breakdown by division is as follows:

Consumer Services:	\$ 1,707,000.30
Legal:	\$ 569,335.25
Advocacy:	\$132,300,000.00

Consumer Affairs Administrator Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston credited the Department staff for its ingenuity and diligence in advocating for South Carolinians. “The State of South Carolina benefits from our efficient and dedicated employees who provide valuable services and programs for its citizens,” she said. “I am particularly pleased that our staff recognizes that how we do things can be as important as what we do,” she explained. “At the Department of Consumer Affairs, we’re committed to the belief that creative, responsible risk-taking in the pursuit of improved customer service is an action to be applauded and encouraged.”

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About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers. Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit www.sconsumer.gov.

SCDCA's Consumer Services Division refunds and adjustments to consumers were in many areas as diverse as: automobile and heavy equipment sales, financial institutions, and travel clubs, to magazine subscription companies and unfulfilled rebates.

The Legal Division recoveries were in several general areas, including: criminal investigations – bank/wire/odometer turn backs, compliance review and inspection, credit counseling and debt settlement companies, and physical fitness clubs.

In addition to the recovery for consumers, the Department's Advocacy Division saved businesses that purchase workers compensation insurance roughly \$132 million: \$130 million for the voluntary market, \$2 million for the assigned risk portion of workers compensation, and \$300,000 for homeowners. This savings occurs on an annual basis as a result of SCDCA's intervention in the request by the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) for increased loss costs as well as its filing for increases in rates for workers compensation insurance that is purchased from the assigned risk pool.

The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs continues to build on its record of success on behalf of consumers who have been wronged in the marketplace. In the past Fiscal Year, SCDCA handled more than 26,000 complaints and inquiries from walk-ins, telephone calls, emails, and consumers who filed complaints online. The top complaint categories were vehicle issues, financial institution matters, and debt collection.

For more information on the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs, call the public information division, 803.734.4190 or toll free 800.922.1594, or visit our website:

www.sconsumer.gov.

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