



NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
Carri Grube Lybarker, Administrator



March 5, 2014

SCDCA Media Contact: Juliana Harris, 803.734.4296

Email: JHarris@scconsumer.gov

Release #14-011

1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Debt Collection Complaints Take Top Spot Again

Columbia, SC... The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) received over **4,100** complaints in calendar year 2013, saving consumers **\$1,344,647** in refunds, credit and adjustments.

The number one complaint category was **Debt Collection at 13%** (553). Not far behind were, **Utilities at 12.9%** (535), **Vehicles at 12%** (498), **Retail Stores at 7%** (291) and **Real Estate at 5%** (219). Debt collection complaints have held the top spot since 2010.

The top five consumer refunds were related to, (1) Debt Collection (debt did not belong to consumer), \$440,912; (2) Other (contract issues with mortgage), \$160,000; (3) Credit Reporting Agencies (inaccurate items on credit report), \$54,620; (4) Vehicles (lemon law; problems with new vehicle), \$30,000; and (5) Mortgage (contract issues with mortgage), \$29,642.

Though complaint numbers are down in comparison to previous years, SCDCA still managed to mediate a similar number of refunds, credits and adjustments compared to calendar year 2012. "I am privileged to work in an agency that prides itself on being a credit to the citizens of this great state," said complaint analyst Quianna Nathaniel-Couthen, "and I will continue to work on their behalf to mediate and resolve their concerns."

The decrease in complaints is attributed to the economy rebounding and a more thorough vetting process implemented by complaint analysts at the front end. SCDCA also launched a new online complaint system on January 1, 2014, which will further streamline the complaint process. Consumers have the ability to create an online profile, check that profile for status updates, and communicate with their complaint analyst through the portal.

To file a complaint, visit www.consumer.sc.gov and click FILE A COMPLAINT. Consumers should also take advantage of the Public Information tool, by researching complaints against businesses before patronizing them.

-end-

03/05/14-ajh

SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

Connect with us:

