

Director's Office, 350 Winter St. NE, Room 200, Salem, Oregon 97301-3878

For immediate release:
Oct. 22, 2009

For more information:
Lisa Morawski, 503-947-7897

Oregon issues order against insurance agent for dumping records *Documents contained clients' personal information*

(Salem) – The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services has issued a cease-and-desist order against insurance agent Robert Warren Spruill for violating the Oregon Consumer Identity Theft Protection Act and the Oregon Insurance Code.

Spruill, owner of Brooke Auto Insurance and Brooke Agency Services Company, LLC, discarded more than 1,000 insurance business records and other insurance-transaction documents into an unlocked garbage dumpster behind the Portland office of Brooke Auto. The documents contained clients' personal information, including client names, Social Security numbers, driver license numbers, bank account numbers, and credit card numbers with card expiration dates.

The department cited Spruill for failing to protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of the personal information he had in his possession and for not having a written information security plan with safeguards to protect customer information. DCBS fined Spruill \$11,000 with \$8,500 suspended as long as he complies with the order.

“Identify theft can wreak havoc on a person's credit history, which can take years to correct,” said David Tatman, administrator of the department's Division of Finance and Corporate Securities. “Fortunately, in this case, alert citizens and media contacted DCBS when they noticed the documents, but unscrupulous persons might not have treated the information so carefully.”

According to national surveys, identity thieves most commonly obtain personal data from lost or stolen wallets, dumpster diving, and mailbox theft.

“There are a number of steps that consumers can and should take to protect themselves from identity theft,” said Keith Dubanevich, chief of staff and special counsel to Oregon Attorney General John Kroger. These include using a locking mail box, not carrying a Social Security card, and opting-out of pre-approved credit offers at www.optoutprescreen.com.

As part of National Protect Your Identity Week, Oct. 17-24, the Better Business Bureau and the National Foundation for Credit Counseling developed the following Web site with tips and information for consumers: <http://www.protectyouridnow.org/>.

The Oregon Identity Theft Protection Act outlines the responsibilities of any business or organization that collects personal data, in order to protect Oregonians from identity theft. The act also gives consumers free or low-cost options for safeguarding their credit files. For more information on Oregon's law, call the Division of Finance and Corporate Securities at 1-866-814-9710 (toll-free) or 503-378-4140, or go to www.dfcs.oregon.gov and click on Identity Theft. To read the order against Spruill, go to: <http://dfcs.oregon.gov/securities/enf/orders/ID-09-0027.pdf>.

###