



Jesse White
SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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**Secretary of State Partners with Federal Officials to Crack
Down on Business Scam Artists**

SPRINGFIELD — State and federal officials announced a new program today that targets business opportunity scam artists and aims to make consumers more aware of their bogus deals.

Project Biz-illion\$ is a partnership between the Illinois Secretary of State's Securities Department and other states across the nation, as well as the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Justice, and other law enforcement officials. The project's goal is to identify and prosecute offenders who bilk consumers out of tens of millions of dollars each year. So far, the agencies have filed over 65 cases against fraudulent promoters.

"I'm so pleased that we are working together with these agencies to try to make people aware of these bogus opportunities and hopefully save them their hard-earned money," Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White said. "We try to get the word out through our office, but it sure helps when other agencies are participating."

In addition to their effort, the group has made a partnership with 105 newspapers nationally, five in Illinois. The newspapers will run their own classified ads letting consumers know what to look for in a legitimate business opportunity.

Another part of the effort, "Project Classified," will monitor the ads that come into their publications and try to screen out potentially deceptive ads.

Illinois newspapers participating in the project are The Journal Standard in Freeport, The Pontiac Daily Leader, The Moline Dispatch, The Paris Beacon-News and The Rock Island Argus.

If you have any questions about a business investment, call Secretary of State Jesse White's Illinois Securities Department at 1-800-628-7937.