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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Secretary White Warns Investors of Unregistered Investment

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State Jesse White issued an alert Tuesday to warn Illinois investors of an unregistered investment that is being marketed in various communities throughout Northern Illinois and particularly the Rockford area. The investment could be offering returns that have an unusually high return rate.

The investment, called the "Oasis Club," has been offering above-market rates of return on "Growth Certificates," and guarantees the return of the principal after a 5-year period. The investment has not been registered with the Illinois Securities Department's Registration Division, as required under Illinois law. White's Securities Department is currently reviewing the matter to determine if any additional violations of Illinois law, other than a failure to register, occurred during the sale of these investments.

The State of Vermont recently issued an "Order To Cease And Desist" against the Oasis Club, and proprietors Herbert F. Argo, and Nan J. Argo, alleging that the investment was unregistered and were being sold through material misrepresentations regarding the investment's promised return. The company lists a Lithuanian address, and markets the investment primarily through group meetings with local representatives.

"This kind of investment is oftentimes questionable because it promises such a high rate of return, and many are nothing but a sophisticated scheme to defraud honest people of their hard-earned money," White said.

In a similar case, The Illinois Securities Department recently

assisted the U.S. Attorney's Office in Urbana with the investigation and prosecution of "Omega Trust & Trading, LTD." In that case, Investors were promised what turned out to be an unrealistically high rate of return on their money after a period of time, sometimes as short as 275 days. Nineteen people were convicted in that case for fraudulently taking in nearly \$22 million from Investors.

Individuals who have been solicited to invest in the Oasis Club, or those who have actually invested money, are encouraged to contact the Illinois Securities Department at 1-800-628-7937. Those with online capabilities can also submit an inquiry via the [Department's online complaint form](#).

Secretary White urges investors to ask the following questions before making an investment:

- Are the seller and investment properly licensed and registered? Illinois Investors may call the Illinois Securities Department's hotline number to find out, or submit an inquiry via the Department's online complaint form.
- Has the seller given you written information that fully explains the investment? Make sure you get proper written information, such as a prospectus or offering circular, before you buy. The documentation should contain enough clear and accurate information to allow you or your financial adviser to evaluate and verify the particulars of the investment.
- Are claims made for the investment realistic? Some things really are too good to be true. Use common sense and get a professional, third party opinion when presented with investment opportunities that seem to offer unusually high returns in comparison to other investment options. Pie-in-the-sky promises often signal investment fraud
- Does the investment meet your personal investment goals? Whether you are investing for long-term growth, investment income or other reasons, an investment should match your own investment goals.