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**WICHITA, KAN.** – The Consumer Protection Division of the District Attorney’s Office is warning the public about seminars or presentations at local hotels. Often these events offer a gift if you attend the entire seminar.

The seminar is usually a high-pressured sales event designed to get you to purchase a product or service.

Those responsible for the presentation place a different spin on their event, characterizing it as a “unique opportunity” for you to buy a course of instruction so you can start your own internet business or just earn extra money at home. Many of these events say you will be “coached to success every step of the way.”

It is common for the consumer/attendee to be asked to present a credit card as a form of identification in order to enter the room where the seminar is held.

During the seminar, testimonials or success stories are presented by video, but only first names are given and there is no time to check the truthfulness of the testimonials. This is because the person conducting the seminar demands you make the purchase on the same day, saying, “It’s your only opportunity.”

In order to escape the high pressure tactic and “just get home,” the consumer/attendee may sign purchase papers, believing he or she has at least three days from the receipt of any item to cancel the purchase. Several days later, in a better frame of mind, the consumer may read through several pages of material to find they owe more to receive the instructive materials promised at the seminar.

In trying to cancel the purchase, the consumer is unable to find adequate contact information for the company. If he or she is successful, a callback promise is made by the company and no one ever calls back.

To avoid becoming a victim of a business opportunity or investment scam, consider the following:

- Investigate any product or service before you make a purchase;
- Talk to experienced business people and experts in the field before investing;
- Who is the seller? Remember, it is more difficult to deal with an out of state vendor once they’ve left town;

- Cancellation periods do not apply to all transactions or circumstances;
- Do not give your credit card to an event organizer as a form of identification or as a requirement for you to attend any seminar;
- Be skeptical of success stories and testimonials as these may be coming from paid actors;
- If seminar representatives are reluctant to answer questions, give vague answers, or want to rush you through the process, don't succumb to such pressure;
- Resist the impulse to buy anything despite an upbeat atmosphere at the presentation which is often staged;
- Don't be pressured by a sales tactic that "Today is your only opportunity to purchase." (If the opportunity is really that good, it will be there tomorrow.)
- Check to determine whether the person/company selling the product or service is required to be licensed in Kansas or in this county to sell the same. Further, additional licenses are often required for an outside person/company to sell in a temporary venue such as a hotel in this county. If so, are they properly licensed?
- Before going to any presentation, conduct some research – check on internet blogs, or with the District Attorney's Consumer Protection Division or the BBB. Are there any previous negative reports about the business and what, if any, rating does the business have?
- The Federal Trade Commission's website ([www.ftc.org](http://www.ftc.org)) contains excellent information on investment and business opportunity seminars or scams. Locate the "Consumer Information" tab. Go to "Jobs and making money" which includes various titles like "Bogus Business Opportunities" and "Investment and Biz Opp Seminars."

Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it is. If you have questions, you may contact the District Attorney's Consumer Protection Division at 316.660.3653.

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