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## **State orders Salem-area collection agency to cease and desist** *Action follows complaints filed against Hawkeye Financial Group, Inc.*

(Salem) — The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services (“DCBS”) issued a cease-and-desist order and levied civil penalties of \$13,400 against Hawkeye Financial Group, Inc. for violations of Oregon laws governing collection agencies.

James Carl Johnson and Danny Michael Lewitzke operated Hawkeye, a collection agency in the Salem/Keizer area, in 2006 and 2007. In connection with the business, Johnson used an alias of Jeff Darling, and Lewitzke used an alias of Daniel Rocha. The firm was not registered with DCBS as a collection agency in Oregon.

The department’s Division of Finance and Corporate Securities (DFCS) began investigating Hawkeye after receiving complaints filed on behalf of Oregon businesses alleging that Hawkeye collected funds from debtors, then failed to forward the proceeds to Hawkeye’s customers, and failed to report the status of accounts placed for collection. DFCS found that Johnson and Lewitzke created a company brochure to market Hawkeye’s services and distributed the brochures to prospective clients. The brochures contained numerous false representations about the scope and experience of Hawkeye’s business. The division also found that Hawkeye, Johnson, and Lewitzke failed to disclose to creditors and debtors that Hawkeye was not registered with DCBS as a collection agency.

“To protect consumers and businesses, Oregon law requires collection agencies to be registered,” said David Tatman, administrator of the Division of Finance and Corporate Securities. “Collection agencies must not engage in dishonest or fraudulent practices in their collections business, and they are required to account for all the funds collected from debtors. We will sanction those who violate these and other requirements.”

DFCS can help consumers find licensing, registration, and enforcement history information on individuals and companies offering financial services. You can call DFCS toll-free (866) 814-9710, (503) 378-4140 in Salem, or go to [www.dfcs.oregon.gov](http://www.dfcs.oregon.gov) and click on “collection and debt consolidation agencies.”

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The Division of Finance and Corporate Securities, part of the Department of Consumer & Business Services, helps ensure that a wide range of financial services, products, and information are available to Oregonians and helps protect consumers from financial fraud and abuse. For more information, visit [www.dfcs.oregon.gov](http://www.dfcs.oregon.gov).

The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon’s largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit [www.dcbs.oregon.gov](http://www.dcbs.oregon.gov).