



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

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ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR. OBTAINS INJUNCTION PERMANENTLY PROHIBITING JOSEPH STOCK FROM SELLING MOTOR VEHICLES TO CONSUMERST

Attorney General Darrell V. McGraw, Jr. announced that on February 28 his office obtained a court injunction permanently prohibiting Charleston used car dealer Joseph Stock from selling motor vehicles to consumers. He may continue to sell vehicles wholesale to businesses. Attorney General McGraw's office previously obtained \$6,014.70 in restitution for two consumer complainants, Scott Jeffries and Ernestine Fox-Penn, through Stock's surety bond with Old Republic Surety Company after Stock refused to resolve their legitimate complaints.

The injunction, which concludes the lawsuit the Attorney General's office filed against Stock in July 2000, also requires Stock and his business associates to refrain from engaging in a long list of consumer law violations if Stock's dealership remains open. Among other things, the court order requires that Stock have state and local business licenses at all times; maintain and make all business records available for inspection by the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and other officials, including the Attorney General's office; use written sales contracts; post proper Buyers Guides on used cars as required by Federal Trade Commission regulations; create proper security interests in vehicles sold on credit; and refrain from repossessing vehicles without first furnishing consumers with proper written notice of their right to cure default. Stock also agreed to reimburse the Attorney General's office in the amount of \$907.35 for the expenses it incurred in the case.

The investigation by the Attorney General's office disclosed that the DMV has commenced three license revocation proceedings against Stock and has suspended his license on various occasions during the last several years. The investigation also disclosed that Stock failed to reimburse Century Surety Company for a \$10,000 claim against his bond that it paid while he was doing business as River City Motors in 1996. Both Century Surety Company and Old Republic Surety Company revoked Stock's bonds, but Stock obtained new bonds, thereby maintaining his car dealer's license.

Attorney General McGraw stated, "The permanent injunction obtained by my office will go a long way toward protecting West Virginia consumers from Mr. Stock's future unlawful practices. Nonetheless, I am concerned that Mr. Stock has managed to retain his dealer's license despite a long history of violations of DMV regulations and the fact that Mr. Stock has failed to reimburse surety companies for more than \$16,000 of claims paid on his behalf. My office intends to seek better coordination and cooperation among state agencies and surety companies to weed out car dealers like Mr. Stock who are flaunting licensing and consumer protection laws."

Any persons wishing to file a complaint about a consumer matter or to alert Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division about unfair or deceptive practices, may do so by calling the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-368-8808, or by printing a complaint form from this web site.

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