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PHOENIX - In recognition of **Arizona Consumer Protection Week**, Attorney General Mark Brnovich released a list of the 2015 Top Consumer Fraud Complaints reported in Arizona. More than 16,000 Arizonans filed consumer complaints in 2015. The Arizona Attorney General's Office distributed more than \$3.1 million dollars in restitution for approximately 9,900 victims of consumer fraud last year. Arizona Consumer Protection Week is held in conjunction with National Consumer Protection week, a nationwide campaign that promotes consumer education and scam awareness.

"Every week is consumer protection week at the Arizona Attorney General's Office," said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. "The most important way to protect your family from crooks, scammers, and con-artists is education."

AZAG 2015 Top Consumer Fraud Complaints:

1. Used Motor Vehicle Sales and Rentals
2. Telephone Scams
3. Telemarketing and Business Opportunity Fraud
4. Mortgages and Loan Modification
5. Motor Vehicle Repairs

Motor vehicle related complaints topped the Attorney General's list for the third year in a row. In 2015, the Attorney General's Office filed Consumer Fraud Lawsuits against a number of auto shop business including Prieto's Auto Sales and Uncle Joe's Auto Sales, both businesses agreed to shut down. The Attorney General's Office also conducted undercover auto stings that revealed deceptive repair practices leading to Consumer Fraud Lawsuits.

Telephone scams jumped to number two on the list. In the typical scam, individuals posing as IRS representatives called consumers and falsely claimed that back taxes are owed and threatened to arrest victims.

One of the best ways consumers can protect themselves against consumer scams is through education and independent research.

Attorney General Brnovich offers these tips to avoid the most common scams:

Motor Vehicle Sales/Repairs

- Ask for car repair shop recommendations from people you trust. Also, check with the Better Business Bureau to see if there are any complaints against the repair shop.
- Get a written, signed estimate before any work is done. The estimate should identify the problem to be repaired, the parts needed and the anticipated labor charge.
- Determine the value of the vehicle before you negotiate the purchase price. Check the National Automobile Dealers Association's (NADA) Guides, Edmunds, and Kelley Blue Book.
- Before buying a vehicle, hire a trusted mechanic to inspect and test drive the car.
- Always read a contract before you sign it.

Telephone Scams/ Telemarketing Fraud

- Hang up on telephone scammers. They will try to prey on anyone who answers a telephone.
- Resist pressure to make a decision immediately.
- Keep your credit card, checking account, or Social Security numbers to yourself. Don't tell them to callers you don't know — even if they ask you to “confirm” this information. That's a trick.
- Sign up for the DO NOT CALL registry. You can register your home or cellphone number either online at www.donotcall.gov or using the FTC's toll number at (888) 382-1222.

For more consumer protection tips visit the Arizona Attorney General's Office website at www.azag.gov.

If you believe you have been the victim of consumer fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at (602) 542-5763, in Tucson at (520) 628-6504, or outside the metro areas at (800) 352-8431. Bilingual consumer protection staff is available to assist. Consumers can also file complaints online by visiting the Attorney General's website at <https://www.azag.gov/complaints/consumer>.

For additional information, members of the media may contact Mia Garcia, Director of Media Relations at (602) 339-5895 or Mia.Garcia@azag.gov.