

Here are some regional tips. One includes a Helena address. Remember to check with the BBB before doing business with anyone to avoid being scammed. You can check on a business or charity at www.bbb.org.



NEWS YOU CAN TRUST

BBB Eastern Washington,
North Idaho & Montana

TIP NUMBER ONE

BBB Urges Consumers to Make Smart Solar Energy Investments

With warm weather approaching and many consumers looking to stick to a budget when making home improvements, many are turning to green solar energy as a solution. BBB advises consumers to be smart about investing in any home improvement project.

Your regional BBB issued [a past warning](#) about questionable energy-saving device sales reps in the region. Solar energy scams are no exception when it comes to the typical contracting scam. Fraudulent contractors prey on those who are unfamiliar with their product. They may show up at your door, advertise in local papers or deliver fliers to your home. Like the typical contracting scam, solar paneling scams can range anywhere from issues with the installation and costs to the actual solar panels themselves.

For more advice you can trust and information you need for hiring the right contractor for your home improvement projects, go to www.bbb.org.

TIP NUMBER TWO

ADS SPORTS of Davenport, IA Implies Affiliation with Area High Schools via Email to Sell Advertising to Area Businesses

Company has F rating with BBB

Your regional BBB received copies of emails sent to them by businesses in its service area by the above-mentioned company offering advertising opportunities on sports posters for Colville (WA) H.S. However, it states they are doing area high schools, so I've included this warning.

The SUBJECT of these emails reads: "Colville Senior High School Football 2011 Schedule.....Go Indians!" The email goes onto say:

All ads on the poster will be exclusive this year, so we will only have one type of each business! There will be up to 5,000 posters to be sent out this September of 2011! So be sure to get your spot on the 2011 football posters now, space is very limited.

Call us to be featured!

BBB did what it encourages all businesses to do when pitched in this manner: make certain that you confirm or verify with the high school named that the company doing the pitching has a legitimate partnership agreement to pitch their services using the name of the school.

FULL RELEASE HERE WITH TIPS

<http://spokane.bbb.org/article/ads-sports-of-davenport-ia-implies-affiliation-with-area-high-schools-via-email-to-sell-advertising-to-area-businesses-26908>

TIP NUMBER THREE

CEO CRAIGSLIST MACBOOK PRO EMAIL SCAM CIRCULATING

Those who have something Posted for Sale on Craigslist,

Will Most Likely Receive this Scam Email

SCENARIO

Your regional BBB had one of its staffers, whose husband had a camper for sale on Craigslist, receive the following email in their INBOX:

FULL RELEASE WITH TIPS HERE

<http://spokane.bbb.org/article/ceo-craigslist-macbook-pro-email-scam-circulating-26894>

TIP NUMBER FOUR

On Sale Home Gym Equipment www.onsalehomegym.com an Online Scam

Using a Spoofed **Montana** # and No Viable Address

Scam requires Green Dot Pre-Paid Paks for Purchase

It was brought to the attention of the BBB that HomeGymClearance.com aka onsalehomegym.com is a scam involving the use of Green Dot Money Pak preloaded credit cards.

The BBB tried to contact this company at 406-282-1434 and other numbers listed in its review and was directed straight to voicemail with a generic non-business related answering service.

This scam also advertises equipment sales on Craigslist using an email address only, for contact. When a potential customer responds to the email, they are directed to the web site, and can only do business via email. Consider this a red flag.

This scam uses a web site that is privately registered. As well, the web site only reflects a phone number, and merely states it is in **Helena, MT**, but does not reveal a viable or legitimate physical address. BBB is unable to find any legitimate registration for this group in Montana.

This scam uses a variety of names and web sites, but is still the same scam attempting to part you with your money.

BBB ADVICE

BBB can't process complaints against a scam, as there is no viable address for processing complaints. If you have an unresolved issue concerning this scam, or have fallen victim, we urge you to file with the Montana Attorney General at www.doj.mt.gov as well as with the FBI at: www.ic3.gov If you wish, you can also file with the Federal Trade Commission at: www.ftc.gov

For more information regarding Green Dot Money paks being used to purport scams online, read this article:
<http://tucsoncitizen.com/bbbconsumeralert/2010/03/25/scammers-use-green-dot-moneypaks-to-steal-online/>

TIP NUMBER FIVE

QUESTIONABLE CALLS BEING REPORTED TO BBB DISPLAY "PHONE SCAM" ON CALLER ID:

Use Spoofed #567-248-4455

*Scam Calls Offering Everything from Reduced Credit Card Interest Rates,
to Loans, to Who Knows What Next*

Your regional BBB is receiving reports from its service area stating that people are getting calls with the CALLER ID title of: "phone scam," displaying the # 567-248-4455.

BBB NOTE: This number is being spoofed, and is not the true # of the people calling you.

BBB did a little digging and searched the number online and series of subjective posts warning people about this number, stating the scammers ask you about everything from offering a loan to reducing your credit card interest and may even attempt to quote your personal information back to you (scary!)

There was also this great report about this very scam at consumerist.com:

<http://consumerist.com/2010/09/caller-id-says-phone-scam.html>

One consumer who received the call in this area stated that she is officially registered on the Do Not Call List, however, this tenacious call seems to still get through.

Coleen Smith | Director of Accredited Business Relations- Montana

Tel: 406-439-4369

Toll-Free: 800-356-1007 (Spokane)

Fax: 406-227-3775

Email: csmith@spokane.bbb.org

www.bbb.org | *Start With Trust*

Better Business Bureau

Serving Eastern Washington, North Idaho and Montana

152 S. Jefferson; Suite 200

Spokane, WA 99201

Access a reliability report. We have information on both local and national companies.

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