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NEWS RELEASE



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Consumer Protection Alert

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Nigerian Advance Fee Scam Customized for Alaska:
Morris Thompson variation could be taste of ploys to come

(Anchorage) – Attorney General David W. Márquez issued a warning today for Alaskans to be on the lookout for variations of the Nigerian e-mail advance fee scam. The Department of Law has received reports of scams involving the late Morris Thompson over past several months and warns that other deceased Alaskans could be used to “bait” potential victims.

“It is a sad fact that con artists prey on today’s innocent Internet users and Alaskans need to be on guard against e-mail scams,” said Márquez. “Be careful about opening or replying to unsolicited e-mails. Do not give out personal information such as bank account information and never pay any fees of any kind.”

The scam is essentially an advance-fee scheme. In the Thompson case people receive emails from a person claiming to be a personal representative of his estate. The scam goes on to state that Thompson lost his life in the Alaska Airlines crash of flight 261, that he left a large estate, and that the recipient of the e-mail can receive 20% of the estate. Eventually, the con artist will ask any person responding for advance fees for various taxes, attorneys fees, transaction fees, or bribes.

“I find it appalling that these con artists would use the name and good reputation of Morris Thompson, or any other well known individual to try and rip off Alaskans,” said Márquez. “Morris dedicated his life to helping Alaskans. Invoking his name in this manner is a disservice to his memory and to all Alaskans.”

Thompson took over the helm of Doyon, Limited, in 1985 guiding it to a position as one of the most profitable and stable ANCSA corporations. He was also the youngest commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a strong leader for the Alaska Federation of Natives, and held a cabinet position in the Hickel administration.

If you have additional questions or if you want to report on any suspicious solicitations, please contact the Department of Law, Consumer Protection Unit at: (907) 269-5200, or toll free at: 1-888-576-2529. If you receive such an offer by email, forward it to the Federal Trade Commission at spam@uce.gov.

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