

**STATE OF COLORADO**  
**Department of State**  
1700 Broadway  
Suite 250  
Denver, CO 80290



**Bernie Buescher**  
**Secretary of State**

**William A. Hobbs**  
**Deputy Secretary of State**

## **News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Nov. 12, 2009

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** Rich Coolidge  
(303) 860-6903  
Rich.Coolidge@sos.state.co.us

Mike Saccone  
(303) 866-5632  
Mike.Saccone@state.co.us

### **Buescher and Suthers promote wise charitable giving** *Campaign encourages donors to maximize their contributions*

Denver, Colorado – Amid the upcoming holiday season, Colorado Attorney General John Suthers and Secretary of State Bernie Buescher appealed to residents to consider charitable giving but also to give wisely.

“Undoubtedly, these are tough economic times,” Buescher said. “However, for those traditional donors or people wanting to give for the first time, my office has developed a user-friendly site that helps people maximize their donations by highlighting charities’ financials. In this season of giving, we want Coloradans to be seasoned-givers.”

In Colorado, charitable organizations and paid solicitors that ask for contributions must file registration documents with the Secretary of State’s Office. That information is then made available on the Secretary of State’s web site through a searchable database. Residents can use the system to learn about an organization’s charitable purposes, see who governs the charity and review the charity’s financial information. The information enables potential donors to determine at a glance how much a charity is spending on its core programs in comparison to its spending on administration and fundraising.

“This information helps give residents the tools they need to weed out the few bad apples that prefer to line their own pockets instead of doing the right thing,” Suthers said. “It is especially important for seniors and their caregivers to do the research before giving.”

In addition to putting key information in the hands of potential donors, state law protects consumers by requiring paid solicitors to clearly identify themselves and to disclose upon request the percentage of the contribution that will go to the charity. While only a small percentage of charities actually solicit by telephone or engage the services of a paid

solicitor, these disclosures ensure that citizens will not be misled about who is calling and how their donation will be used.

As part of the campaign, the state has rolled out a new web site called CheckTheCharity.com, which links the Secretary of State's office, the Department of Law, the Colorado Nonprofit Association and The Denver Post's Season to Share. To further the effort, the coalition will invite various stakeholders to host a link on their own web pages directing contributors to the site.

“Our goal is to increase giving in Colorado,” said Renny Fagan, President and CEO of the Colorado Nonprofit Association. “Nonprofits are essential to the quality of life in every community. Especially in this down economy, nonprofits need funds to sustain existing programs and meet an increased demand for services. Every Coloradan can make a difference by finding a cause they believe in, and an organization they trust to use their donated dollars effectively.”

Both Buescher and Suthers particularly warned seniors and their caregivers to be wary of potential scams. They encouraged potential donors to abide by the following four rules for giving:

- Watch out for charities with names that sound similar to well-known organizations,
- Do not pay in cash. Donate by check made payable to the charity,
- Most well-known charities will never solicit donations over the phone or send a courier to retrieve your check, and
- Research the charity's disclosure and financial statements by visiting CheckTheCharity.com.

###

