

## Iowa Government Agency Heads Present Iowa Fraud Fighters in Ames

Written by Lori Blackburn  
Friday, 14 March 2014 07:46

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Public Education Program and Complimentary Luncheon to Assist Iowans Prevent and Report Investment Fraud Comes to Ames on April 3

AMES, IA – Iowa Insurance Commissioner Nick Gerhart announced today that the Iowa Insurance Division (IID) is bringing the statewide “Iowa Fraud Fighters – Shield Your Savings” public education program to the Hilton Garden Inn in Ames on April 3. The program will educate and empower Iowans to combat and report investment and insurance fraud.

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### [Con artists](#)

are targeting Americans age 60 and older, swindling more than 5 million Americans out of almost \$3 billion each year,” said Commissioner Gerhart. “Unfortunately, many smart Iowans have fallen victim to these very slick and sophisticated investment scammers, and some have lost their entire life savings.”

### [Martha-Jo Ennis](#)

, a retired school teacher from Marion, Iowa, said she never understood how anyone could fall for an investment scheme until it happened to her—and she lost her retirement savings and the money she invested from the sale of her family farm.

According to Linn County District Court records, Ennis was one of numerous Iowa victims who lost millions of dollars in a Ponzi-type scheme orchestrated by Noah Aulwes, former owner of Covenant Advisors of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Aulwes plead guilty last year to theft in the first degree, securities fraud and money laundering, and received a prison sentence of up to 10 years. Victim impact statements read during the hearing stated Aulwes preyed on retirees, using charm and Christianity to get a foot in the door and gain victims’ trust.

“Iowans need to take the time to double-check investment offers and verify with our agency whether the adviser and offer are legitimate,” says Commissioner Gerhart. “Our goal is to educate Iowans on common scams and arm them with tools and tips to prevent fraud from happening to them. The Iowa Insurance Division and our partner government agencies are attacking this senior fraud problem at the forefront. We are coming to Ames to help central

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Iowans prevent fraud.”

Commissioner Gerhart, Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, Iowa Department on Aging Director Donna Harvey and Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) Director Kris Gross will present the Iowa Fraud Fighters program and panel discussion.

Registration begins at 11:30 a.m., lunch is served at noon and the program concludes at 1:30 p.m. Informational booths staffed by agency representatives, and Aging Resources of Central Iowa and AARP, forum assistance providers, close at 2 p.m. To RSVP for the presentation and complimentary luncheon, call toll-free at

[866-559-7114](tel:866-559-7114)

, or fill out the online form at [IowaFraudFighters.gov](http://IowaFraudFighters.gov) by March 27.

“This forum gives Iowans the opportunity to speak with several government agencies and learn about the state resources available to help prevent fraud from happening to them or a loved one,” said Gerhart. “We also want Iowans to know we are here to help them take charge in the fight against fraud and the importance of reporting fraud to state and federal agencies when it occurs.”

Iowans are encouraged to visit

[www.IowaFraudFighters.gov](http://www.IowaFraudFighters.gov)

to learn about common investment and insurance scams and discover tips and tools to prevent fraud. The site includes answers to frequently asked questions and a checklist of information to gather from investment advisers to verify the legitimacy of the offer and the investment adviser. In addition to the community forums and website, the public education program includes a TV and newspaper public service advertising campaign.

The Iowa Insurance Division has general control, supervision and direction over all insurance and securities business transacted in the state, and enforces Iowa’s laws and regulations. The IID investigates consumer complaints and prosecutes companies, agents and brokers engaging in unfair trade practices. Consumers with insurance or investment questions or complaints may contact the IID toll-free at

[877-955-1212](tel:877-955-1212)

, or visit the division on the Web at

[www.iid.state.ia.us](http://www.iid.state.ia.us)

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