

September 25, 2006

The Hon. Lawrence Wasden
Attorney General
700 W. Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720

Dear Attorney General Wasden:

The citizens of Idaho are being defrauded everyday by unscrupulous individuals posing as locksmiths. The Associated Locksmiths of America, Inc. (ALOA) has discovered that these individuals have set up fake addresses and phone numbers in Idaho. When a locked-out consumer telephones to get help, they call a local number given to them by directory assistance or the Yellow Pages. However, these companies manipulate local phone listings with multiple false addresses and phone numbers to make it seem like a neighborhood businesses and to increase the probability of being called. In actuality, consumers are calling out-of-state operations that are not locksmith companies. The consumer is quoted a reasonable price over the phone, but when the person posing as a locksmith finishes the job, the consumer is charged a considerable amount more for sub-standard work. These out-of-state operations are set up solely to make money by purposely defrauding the citizens of Idaho.

The complaint we hear most often by consumers is for car openings. The price quoted over the phone to stranded motorist is around \$45. When the individual arrives and unlocks the car, they hand the motorist a bill for \$135 - \$150. This unscrupulous individual tells the frustrated consumer that the \$45 was just the service call and that it was another \$90 - \$100 for servicing the lock. We know a number of incidents of elderly consumers locked out of their homes and being charged \$900 to \$1700 to replace a \$12 lock. This practice is blatant defrauding of the public. As you can see from the attached articles this is a nationwide problem, one that has now come to Idaho.

The Illinois Attorney General has successfully prosecuted these individuals (see attached), and ALOA is asking that you pursue this matter as well. We are available to provide you with further information and willing to work closely with your office on this matter.

Sincerely,

ASSOCIATED LOCKSMITHS OF AMERICAN, INC.

Charles W. Gibson, Jr., CAE
Executive Director