



Information Release: May 16, 2006

Amended Complaint and Preliminary Injunction in Premier Benefits Matter

Commission approval of amended complaint, entry of preliminary injunction, and appointment of a permanent receiver: The Commission announced today that it has filed an amended complaint in *FTC v. Universal Premium Services, Inc., et al.*, currently pending against telemarketing company defendants Premier Benefits, Consumer Reward Network, Star Communications, Continuity Partners, Connect2USA, and the individuals who owned and operated them. According to the Commission, the defendants cold-called consumers falsely promising them valuable incentives such as gift cards, “shopping sprees,” movie passes, and gas vouchers for a nominal shipping and handling fee in order to get the consumers to disclose their bank account information. They then made unauthorized debits from the consumers’ accounts and harassed the consumers in an attempt to coerce them into paying additional charges for memberships in purported buying clubs. The FTC’s original complaint, filed in February 2006, resulted in a temporary restraining order against the defendants for their alleged participation in a “Wal-Mart Shopping Spree” scam.

Through the amended complaint, the FTC has added All Star Access, Inc.; Prime Time Ventures, Inc.; Merchant Risk Management, Inc.; and Pantel One Corporation as defendants involved in the deceptive and abusive telemarketing campaign. The amended complaint also names Christine MacGregor and her company Midwest Properties, Inc. as defendants, alleging that defendant Brian MacGregor fraudulently transferred his assets to Christine MacGregor and Midwest Properties, Inc., in violation of the Federal Debt Collection Procedures Act.

The FTC also announced today that its request for a preliminary injunction against the defendants in this matter and for the appointment of a permanent receiver over the corporate defendants and related entities has been granted, and was entered by the court on March 22, 2006.

The Commission vote authorizing the staff to file the amended complaint was 5-0. It was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. Copies of the amended complaint and preliminary injunction are available now on the FTC’s Web site as a link to this press release. (FTC File No. P044808, Civ. No. CV06-0849 SJO (OPx); the staff contacts are Faye Chen Barnouw and Jennifer Brennan, FTC Western Region, Los Angeles, 310-824-4343; see press release dated February 28, 2006.)

Copies of the documents mentioned in this release are available from the FTC’s Web site at <http://www.ftc.gov> and from the FTC’s Consumer Response Center, Room 130, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20580. Call toll-free: 1-877-FTC-HELP.

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