



CITY OF PINOLE

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PINOLE POLICE DEPARTMENT SPECIAL INFORMATION BULLETIN CRIME PREVENTION ALERT

Bulletin Date: February 25, 2010

Type of Report: * **SCAM** * DECEPTIVE SOLICITATIONS * **CAUTION**

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The Secretary of State, Debra Bowen, would like to make you aware of some deceptive solicitations that businesses may be receiving. The solicitations imply companies have to go through a private, third-party vendor and pay an exorbitant fee in order to file official documents with the Secretary of State's office.

Some solicitations involve "Statement of Information" documents that appear at first glance to be official. The documents require a fee to file with the Secretary's office and threaten fines for non-compliance. The most recent misleading mailing implies that a company must pay \$495 to a private, third-party vendor in order to file a dissolution document when a business goes out of business.

Under the law, no business is required to go through a third party to file a document with the Secretary of State's office. There is no need for any company to pay more than the applicable statutory filing fee that, in most cases, is no more than \$25.

Perhaps even worse than the outrageous fees being charged is that if the third party does not file the correct documents with the Secretary of State's office, the business entity not the third party may face additional fees and penalties. Submitting

documents and fees to a third party alone does not meet the business entity's legal obligation to file with the Secretary of State office.

A Customer Alert on the Secretary of State website at www.sos.ca.gov/business/be/alert-misleading-solicitations.htm has more information about these deceptive ploys, information on how businesses can file documents directly with the Secretary of State, and how they can contact the Attorney General if they have already been victimized or received one of these solicitations. The Secretary of State is working with the California Attorney General to go after the companies sending out these misleading solicitations.

If you have questions about this or any other solicitation relating to filings with the Secretary of State please call (916) 653-6244.