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NEWS RELEASE

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Investors Beware of Con Artists Looking to Profit from Fear and Uncertainty

Boise, Idaho... The Idaho Department of Finance reminds investors to beware of con artists seeking to capitalize on fear and uncertainty related to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, and its impact on financial markets.

"We know con artists are opportunistic and use current events to add legitimacy to their scams. Never make an investment decision without understanding what you are investing in, who you are doing business with, where your money is going, how it will be used, and how you can get it back," said Patricia Perkins, Director of the Department of Finance. "Always ask if the salesperson and the security are registered in Idaho."

To help investors identify common signs of possible investment fraud, ask these three questions before making a new investment.

- **First**, is the investment being offered with a guaranteed high return with little or no risk? All investments carry risk that you may potentially lose some or all of your money. Anyone who says their investment offer has no risk is lying. No one can guarantee an investment return.
- **Second**, is there a sense of urgency or limited availability surrounding the investment? If the offer is legitimate, it will be there later. If someone offers you a "can't miss" investment opportunity and puts you on the spot, don't be afraid to walk away.
- **Third**, is the person offering the investment, and the investment itself, properly licensed or registered? For the same reasons you wouldn't go to an unlicensed doctor or dentist, you should avoid unregistered investment salespeople and their products.

"Make sure you have all the facts before you hand your money over to someone else to invest," Perkins said.

Be sure to contact the Department if you have questions about the investment professional you are working with or the product being offered. Before making any financial decisions, do your homework and contact the Idaho Department of Finance or visit our website at www.finance.idaho.gov

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*Department of Finance Press Releases and a list of **free** financial literacy events can be found on the Internet at www.finance.idaho.gov and may be obtained by contacting the Department at (208) 332-8000 or Idaho toll-free at 1-888-346-3378.*