

# CONSUMER ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 10, 2006

Contact: Julie Wheeler, President & CEO  
540-342-3455 or 800-533-5501  
Fax: 540-345-2289  
E-mail: [info@roanoke.bbb.org](mailto:info@roanoke.bbb.org)

## Door-to-Door Magazine Sales Crew in the Area

A door-to-door magazine sales operation is making its way through western Virginia. To date, the business, Great Lakes Circulation, Inc. d/b/a Gold Coast Subscriptions, does not have a license to solicit in Roanoke localities. The Bureau has been unable to verify if the firm has obtained the necessary permits through the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry. Consumers have reported that the sales representatives are offering long-term subscriptions to a number of magazines.

Great Lakes Circulation, Inc. is located in Evergreen, CO. According to the Denver, CO BBB, the company is an order processing center for magazine and book sales groups. Consumers report the prices for the magazine subscriptions are usually higher than if they had just subscribed to the magazine by themselves. This is because a portion of the amount received is kept by the sales group doing the solicitation for the purposes of their fund-raising. The firm is **NOT** a member of the Better Business Bureau.

Consumers also report they don't get magazines after they order. The sales contract says that the company has up to 6 months to complete the delivery of the individual magazine subscriptions that are being processed for the sales group. Consumers sometimes report that the sales groups in door-to-door sales have questionable or vague fund raising causes. Consumers should always ask and be clear for what the fund raising is intended. It is legal for anybody to solicit door-to-door for any reason; so do not assume these door-to-door sales groups are charities. The Denver BBB has processed 76 complaints on the firm in their current three-year reporting period. The majority of complaints involve sales issues, delivery issues, and refund and exchange issues. The firm has resolved complaints presented by the Bureau.

"Consumers should be aware that many door-to-door magazine sales often involve hidden costs," said Julie Wheeler, president of the BBB Serving Western Virginia. "Unscrupulous salespeople sometimes trick consumers into purchasing multi-year magazine subscriptions costing hundreds of dollars. When a salesperson offers a package of magazines for a few dollars a week, it may sound like a real bargain, but it may include inflated prices and subscriptions stretching over several years."

**Consumers should use caution before agreeing to these types of offers. If contacted by a telemarketer or door-to door salesperson soliciting magazine subscriptions, use these guidelines:**

- Listen carefully to the initial sales presentation.
- Don't be afraid to interrupt and ask questions.
- If you're not interested, say good-bye and hang up or shut the door.

- **If it sounds like a good deal, ask the salesperson for his or her name, and the name, address and telephone number of the company.**
- **Contact the Better Business Bureau for a reliability report on the company.**
- **Before buying anything, ask for the total yearly cost of each magazine and of the entire package purchased. Compare those costs to regular magazine subscription rates offered directly through the publication.**
- **Ask to receive a written copy of the sales terms.**
- **Make the check payable to the company, not to an individual. Do not pay in cash.**

Whenever you sign a contract or make a purchase over \$25 as a result of an in-home solicitation, you have a three-day right to cancel. Make sure the salesperson has provided you with the proper "notice of cancellation" form and **make sure that the notice is dated correctly**. If you wish to cancel your subscriptions, you must do so in writing within three days of the receipt of the agreement.

Remember, any legitimate company that wants your business will be more than willing to allow you the time to "check them out." Don't fall prey to high-pressure tactics. Consumers may contact the Better Business Bureau at 342-3455 or 800-533-5501 and on the web at [www.vabbb.org](http://www.vabbb.org).

**END**



Better Business Bureau® Serving Western Virginia  
31 West Campbell Avenue Roanoke, Virginia 24011-1301