



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM



Press Release

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AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB AND BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU WARN CONSUMERS TO BE WARY OF PUPPY SCAMS

-- Longing for a Canine Companion? Don't Get Conned! --

Northwest North Carolina – The American Kennel Club® (AKC®) and the BBB of Northwest North Carolina are warning consumers about scams targeting unsuspecting puppy buyers.

Both the AKC and the BBB have recently received a number of reports from consumers throughout the nation who have lost money after responding to online or newspaper classified advertising. Commonly, the scammer —posing as a breeder—will place an ad offering free or inexpensive puppies. Communicating solely through emails, the scammer may claim that he/she is affiliated with a religious organization and is being relocated to a foreign country and needs to re-home the puppies.

"A good con artist knows all the right heart-strings to pull when using a pet-lovers fondness for cute little puppies. They'll say that they don't care about money and just want to find a good home," said David W. Dalrymple, President of the BBB of Northwest North Carolina. "Then quickly the fees for shipping the pet mount up and the consumer can lose hundreds of dollars before realizing they've been conned and will never get their puppy."

"This is certainly not the only scam to be aware of, but it is a common one," says AKC spokesperson Lisa Peterson. "Because of the emotional investment, consumers are more vulnerable to being taken advantage of when it comes to a cute cuddly puppy than with any other purchase. A dog is a major investment -- a living, breathing being who will rely on you for 10 years or more. Take time to educate yourself on the hallmarks of a legitimate and responsible breeder."

The AKC and BBB offer the following advice:

- **Do your research.** Ask if the breeder is a member of an AKC-affiliated club and contact that club to verify membership or check recent listings of available AKC Litters from breeders at: <http://www.akc.org/classified/index.cfm>. You can also check with the BBB (www.nwnc.bbb.org) and the AKC (919-233-9767) to see if there are any complaints about the breeder. Request references and speak to other people who have purchased dogs from this breeder—especially if the breeder does not live near you.
- **Beware of breeders who seem overly concerned with getting paid.** Any reputable breeder will be far more concerned with the appropriateness of the potential pet home than what and when they are getting paid. Make sure you have clear expectations – ideally in writing – of how and when the pup will be paid for. Be especially wary of any breeder who insists that you wire money and who calls to ask for more money to be wired to cover last minute shipping fees.

- **Don't be fooled by a slick web site.** Unscrupulous breeders and even outright scams can be represented by professional-looking web sites that lure you in with fraudulent pictures of adorable puppies. At the very least speak with the breeder on the telephone and ideally meet the breeder, the puppy and the dam in person. If you locate a breeder online, never send money without checking their references and credentials first. The AKC recommends that you first contact the national organization for the breed (Parent Club). It is essential to visit the breeder at their home to see the entire litter and the care and conditions given to the puppies prior to purchasing.
- **Take your time.** Beware of breeders who claim to have multiple breeds ready to ship immediately. It's highly unlikely that your perfect puppy will be available for shipping on the very day you call. Gestation and socialization of a litter takes months -- no puppy should be separated from the dam before 8 weeks of age.
- **Report a scam.** Anyone who has experienced a dog-related scam should report it to their local authorities as well as the local BBB (www.nwnc.bbb.org) to file a complaint. Consumers can also direct questions and concerns to AKC Customer Service at 919-233-9767, or e-mail info@akc.org.

"If you are sure you are dealing with an actual breeder who has a dog to sell, there are still things to be aware of," adds Peterson. "If you expect the dog you are buying to be AKC-registrable, you must obtain documentation when you pick up the dog. Be wary of excuses such as 'AKC hasn't sent the papers yet.' If a breeder is doing his paperwork in a timely manner, there is no reason the AKC Dog Registration Application form should not be available, so wait until you receive it before you pay for and take home your puppy. Once you have completed the financial aspect of the transaction, there is little recourse for an unsatisfied buyer."

- To learn about the hallmarks of a responsible breeder, visit:
http://www.akc.org/press_center/facts_stats.cfm?page=responsible_breeder

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The American Kennel Club, founded in 1884, is a not-for-profit organization which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its nearly 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 20,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog trials. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Companion Animal Recovery and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit www.akc.org.

About the BBB System

BBB is an unbiased, non-profit entity that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. Businesses and charities that earn BBB membership contractually agree and adhere to the organization's high standards of ethical business behavior. BBB provides objective advice, free business Reliability Reports and charity Wise Giving Reports, and educational information on topics affecting marketplace trust. BBB also offers complaint and dispute resolution support for consumers who need help with unfair or unethical business treatment. The first BBB was founded in 1912. Today, 128 BBBs serve communities across the U.S. and Canada, evaluating and monitoring more than three million local and national businesses and charities. Please visit www.bbb.org for more information about the BBB System.