

State of South Carolina

Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Solicitor's Office Marks Second Anniversary of Worthless Check Unit With More than \$1,000,000.00 Returned to Locals

Charleston, S.C. – November 1, 2011 – A program launched two years ago by Solicitor Scarlett Wilson to target fraudulent check writers has recouped \$1,098,126.47 in restitution payments for 486 Charleston area businesses and individuals. The check unit gives bad check writers the opportunity to make the check good or face criminal prosecution. “Restitution to victims is critical, especially in light of the current economic climate,” Wilson said. “So many businesses can’t afford to write off losses from this kind of fraud. The funds recovered through the WCU make it easier for businesses to keep prices down and people employed.”

Businesses nationwide have reported sharp increases in bad check writing since the recession began, and bogus checks top the list as the most common form of payment fraud to businesses. The WCU leverages the authority of the Solicitor’s Office to help local business owners who fall victim to payment fraud. Since it was launched last August, the WCU has received over 8,244 worthless checks from area businesses and individuals. Solicitor Wilson has pushed for expanding the WCU into Berkeley County but has yet to secure funding. “We remain hopeful that Berkeley County Council help us begin helping the citizens in Berkeley County recoup their losses, as well,” said Wilson.

The process for recouping funds is easy: victims of “bad” checks can visit www.scsolicitor9.org and download the form from the Worthless Check Unit section, fill it out and mail it to the Solicitor’s Office. The WCU has been recognized by the Better Business Bureau of Central South Carolina and Charleston and the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

“We’ve made the process of recouping funds as simple as possible,” Wilson said. “Business owners shouldn’t have to navigate ‘red-tape’ to collect what is rightfully theirs.”

Checks that qualify for payment for the WCU program include:

- Checks *received* in Charleston County
- Checks given for labor (payroll checks) or personal services
- Checks given in payment of merchandise, cash, services
- Checks deposited within ten (10) days of receipt
- Checks returned by the bank due to
 - Insufficient funds
 - Account closed
 - Stop payment

For more information about the WCU and helpful hints to avoid becoming a victim of payment fraud, visit <http://www.scsolicitor9.org>.

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