

**Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions**  
**Cautions Investors to Prepare for Ebola-Related Scams**  
*Rise in Ebola-Related Investment Website Names Raises Suspicion*

October 31, 2014 – Following the outbreak of Ebola in western Africa and its appearance in North America, the Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions today cautioned investors to beware of opportunistic internet-based investment schemes related to the disease.

“Past experience tells us that periods of uncertainty or fear are prime time for con artists looking to make a quick score,” said John Ducrest, Commissioner. “Investors should approach with caution any unsolicited Ebola-related investment opportunities, especially those received through the Internet.”

Commissioner Ducrest said an analysis of Internet domain names by the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA), of which the Office of Financial Institutions is a member, found nearly 1,200 domains with “Ebola” in their name have been registered with top-level domains, such as .com, .net, .org since April 2014. About 1,000 of those registrations have occurred since July, as awareness of the crisis spread. Of these sites, 184 were identified by NASAA’s Internet Fraud Investigations project group as suspicious.

“Our system identified a number of sites that may be suspect,” said Jake van der Laan, Director of Enforcement for the New Brunswick Financial and Consumer Services Commission and chair of NASAA’s Internet Fraud Investigations project group. “Although we have not investigated any of these sites, a review of domain names indicates that there certainly appear to be those intent on raising Ebola-related funds or otherwise trying to leverage the crisis for financial gain.”

Van der Laan said a review of Ebola-related domain names found several with the words “fund,” “invest,” “stock,” or “futures” in their titles. For example, the following domain names have been registered: hotebolastocks.com; bestebolastocks.com; ebolafutures.com; ebolainvesting.com; ebolaoutbreakstocks.com; ebolastocks.com; and fundsforebola.com.

Most of the domain names are “parked” and have no content, indicating that either someone has purchased the domain hoping to resell it, or the content is not ready yet.

Commissioner Ducrest reminded investors to use common sense. “Pie in the sky promises of quick wealth generally are red flags signaling fraud ahead,” Ducrest said. He urged individuals to contact the Office of Financial Institutions to determine if both the promoter of the investment and the investment itself are licensed and registered. If not, they may be operating illegally. The Office of Financial Institutions can be reached at (877) 516-3653 toll-free or locally at (225) 925-4512.