INVESTIGATE BEFORE YOU INVEST

The Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation Offers Extensive
Background Information
on Stockbrokers and Investment Advisers

May 12, 2009—The Madoff Ponzi scheme and other high-profile breaches of trust
by financial professionals are strong reminders of the need to check the background of
financial professionals before you trust them with your money.

Information is an investor's best defense against investment fraud. The information
you need to make an informed choice about who to entrust with your money can be found at
the Department of Business Regulation. Our office should be your first call for detailed
background information about your stockbroker or investment adviser. And the time to make
that call is before you turn over any money.

The Department of Business Regulation offers investors extensive employment,
disciplinary and registration information about their stockbroker or investment adviser. As
an investor, you can request a public report of background information on any stockbroker,
brokerage firm, investment adviser and investment adviser firm licensed to do business in
the state.

To receive background information about a stockbroker, call the Securities
Division at (401) 462-9584 and ask for materials available through the Central
Registration Depository (CRD) about that individual. For similar information about an
investment adviser, ask for materials available through from the Investment Adviser
Registration Depository (IARD). These computerized national databases contain licensing
and registration information on more than 650,000 stockbrokers and over 260,000
investment advisers. You can also receive information on their employment, examination
and disciplinary histories, civil judgments, arbitration decisions, criminal convictions or
indictments, bankruptcies, disciplinary actions, arbitration and civil proceedings.

This information is easy to obtain, and state securities regulators want to help you to
make informed decisions before you invest your hard-earned dollars. While the vast
majority of the stockbrokers, brokerage firms, investment advisers and investment adviser
firms are honest and reputable, it pays to remember that just like many other professions,
there are those individuals and firms who are not. If you suspect that something is wrong,
the sooner you call us, the better. Your call also might help prevent others from being
harmed by a fraudulent scheme.