

Better Business Bureau warns of work-at-home ploys

By Kim Wilt

"EXTRA HOURS earn you \$500 per 1000 stuffing envelopes with our circulars." "Addressers Wanted Immediately! Work at home—no experience necessary—excellent pay." "\$200 WEEKLY MAILING CIRCULARS***Materials Supplied***Start immediately, Free Details."

The above three ads were printed in the *Daily Nebraskan* a few weeks ago.

This prompted a letter from the Lincoln Better Business Bureau, to the paper which said, in part, "There are hundreds of work-at-home schemes which take in over half a billion dollars per year out of the pockets of millions of people. . . The Bureau urges caution in answering any ad that offers you great profits for some at-home-work that requires no experience on your part and is in great demand."

No work offered

A pamphlet put out by the educational

division of the bureau states "none of these companies . . . has been found to actually offer real employment as implied or to guarantee a market at a fixed price for the finished product."

Lois Tefft, manager of the Lincoln BBB, said when people answer such an ad, they receive a letter asking them to send money for a kit. The kit instructs them to choose a name that sounds like a legitimate company and then place an ad in the paper, similar to the ad that they answered.

costs of printing and postage involved in placing an ad in a newspaper or magazine. The companies will sometimes send a list of magazines and newspapers that accept such ads, she said.

Schemes similar

Although there are variations on the "work-at-home schemes," Tefft said investigations show "they all operate the same way."

Because of the number of these ads, and the similarity between them, the BBB does not keep separate files on each company.

Instead when consumers call to inquire about a specific ad, they are told that all similar ads are considered "work-at-home schemes," and the BBB considers them highly questionable.

Attempts to contact the three companies placing the above ads were unsuccessful as the companies were not located at the addresses listed nor were they listed by the Better Business Bureaus in the three

cities.

Operate in Lincoln

Tefft said "work-at-home schemes are such a common practice any more, that it would use all our time and postage to track them down."

"We can usually identify them," she said. The BBB averages 200 calls a month regarding such companies, and has received 50 complaints this year about specific schemes.

"We had two or three (schemes) operating in Lincoln last summer," she said, but there are none now.

An aide in the postal inspector's office said the postal service is aware of the problem, but said "We don't have it here in Lincoln. It's more on the eastern seaboard, and around L.A."

It is a federal offense and considered mail fraud to offer these schemes, he said. If such a scheme was found, he said "We would take it through the U.S. Attorney in Lincoln, and then to a grand jury."

consumer byline

"There is no actual work involved, no addressing of envelopes," Tefft said.

She said a person would have to pay the

HEW claims Eppley Cancer Institute misused \$1 million

By Lucy Bighia

The Eppley Cancer Institute should refund about \$1.1 million it inappropriately charged the National Cancer Institute for cancer research; a spokesman for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare said Thursday.

HEW regional audit director John Stanford said an audit done by HEW found that the Eppley Institute had inappropriately used some of the federal funds and equipment provided under a four-year contract with the National Cancer Institute.

The audit grew out of a report from the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, Stanford said.

However, Dr. Neal Vanselow, chancellor of the University of Nebraska Medical Center where the Eppley Institute is located, said, "it is our position that we don't owe the federal government any money."

Authorization questioned

Vanselow said the institute has 30 days to submit a written statement to HEW. After that, the charges will be discussed with the HEW auditors and hopefully resolved, he said.

If an agreement isn't reached, the NU Board of Regents will take the matter to the HEW Committee for Appeals and possibly to court, Vanselow said.

Part of the proposed refund is \$394,000 for all research projects which the audit said were done without written authorization, Stanford said.

Vanselow said the projects were orally approved, and progress reports were submitted regularly to the National Cancer Institute.

The audit, according to Stanford, also said the institute should return about \$717,000 charged for support services, such as photography and animal care.

Stanford added that \$418,178 of this should have been charged to industrial research.

Contest repayment

The regents contest repayment for support services for several reasons, Vanselow said.

Vanselow said they questioned the method used to arrive at such allocations of costs, and added the audit overstates the extent to which support service funds were used for non-contract services.

He said an alternative auditing method was proposed by the university last spring, in response to a draft of the audit.

Stanford said the auditors returned to the institute in June and July, but were unable to implement the university's method because there was not enough data available.

Records incomplete

Vanselow said the institute could not furnish all the information the auditors requested because in the past it had not been required to keep detailed records of individual projects.

Stanford acknowledged this, but said the federal contract did require a general accounting of research projects.

The fact that only a general accounting was required "doesn't justify charging costs of unrelated projects or industrial research work to the contract," Stanford said.

Vanselow pointed out that, for the first two years of the contract, the institute had reached a "full and final settlement" with HEW. Yet those two years were included in the HEW audit, he said.

Band trip funded this year

The UNL marching band will attend the Orange Bowl game Jan. 1, according to Richard Fleming of the Office of University Information.

Fleming said funding for the bands' trip to Miami will come from the bowl funds.

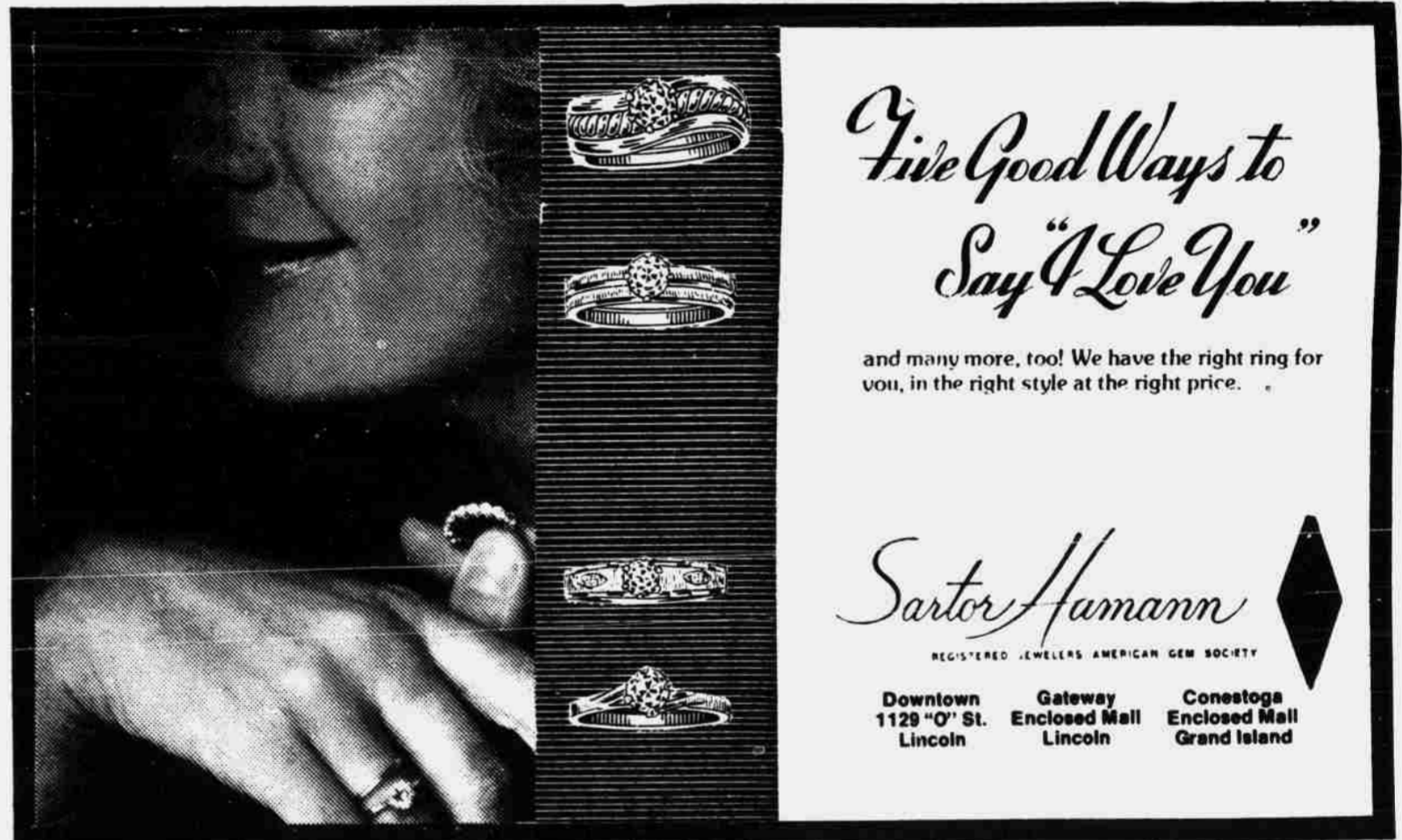
In the past, band members have had to raise funds in order to attend Husker's bowl games.



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