

Search

Go

ADVERTISEMENT

With a **FREE*** Motorola RAZR in your choice of black, pink, or blue. [Get a Free Phone](#)

*Two-year agreement and other restrictions apply. Price after \$50 Mail-in Rebate Promotion Card

- Wireless**
- Home
- Local News
- U.S. & World
- Weather
- Traffic
- Sports
- Business
- Consumer
- Politics
- Health
- Entertainment
- Food
- Pets
- Water Cooler
- Seen on CBS2
- School Closings
- Links & Numbers
- Morning News
- Special Reports
- Table For 2
- Eye On Chicago
- Gas Prices
- Lottery
- 2 Investigators
- Services**
- Classifieds
- Careers
- Shopping
- Dating
- Travel
- Real Estate
- Yellow Pages
- Lifestyle**
- Beauty & Style
- Family
- New Baby
- Collections**
- Video
- Slideshows
- In Our Area**
- Community Events
- Contests
- Other Ways to Get News**
- Newsletters & Alerts
- XML Feeds
- About Us**
- TV Schedule
- News Team
- Station Info
- CBS 2 Jobs
- Contact Us

Local News By Area

CBS 2 Most Popular Pages



2008 Celebrity Deaths
[More](#)

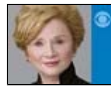
- [Coolest Fighter Jets ... EVER!](#)
- [Did You Know? Stars From Chicago!](#)
- [In To Be Out: Gay Celebrities](#)
- [The Drinks Dudes Should Avoid](#)

Mar 3, 2008 6:31 pm US/Central

[Digg](#) | [Facebook](#) | [E-mail](#) | [Print](#)

2 Investigation Leads To Action In Gas Gamble

Deceptive Practices Brought To Light In Undercover Investigation



Reporting **Pam Zekman**

CHICAGO (CBS) — Sales people may have come to your house offering to help you save money on the gas bill. People who signed up wound up trapped in a gas gamble.

CBS 2 exposed the apparently deceptive practices of U.S. Energy Savings employees.

Now, 2 Investigator Pam Zekman reports the Illinois Commerce Commission is being asked to take action against the company.

"We are here today to say enough is enough. U.S. Energy sales trickery must stop," said David Kolata of the Citizens Utility Board.

U.S. Energy Savings, a Canadian firm with five offices in the Chicago area, sends teams of sales people into neighborhoods, telling homeowners they will save money by signing contracts that lock them into five-year deals to buy gas for more money than they are currently paying to the utilities.

"What we found is 99 percent of their offers are money losers," Kolata said. "And the average loss at this point I believe is over \$700."

The misrepresentations listed in this complaint include salesmen saying they work for Peoples Gas or Nicor gas, the Illinois Commerce Commission, or a government program to protect against rising gas prices, or that they are circulating a petition to lower gas prices.

"The salesman made it sound like I would save tons of money by signing this petition," said former U.S. Energy Savings customer Gilbert Ortiz.

The complaint charges Hispanics and senior citizens were targeted.

"We find the targeting and predatory practices of older consumers simply appalling," said Bob Gallo of AARP Illinois.

The complaint cites the findings of our CBS 2 undercover investigation as helping to show how systemic the problem is.

"The Channel 2 investigation was essential because for the first time someone got involved and got inside the training process and we were basically able to see this was coming from the top down," Kolata said.

"We are encouraging the ICC to put a stop to these tactics once and for all," he added.

A company official denied the company authorized the sales tactics CBS 2 exposed in our investigation. And he said the company was making changes to make sure those practices stopped.

A consumer fraud complaint filed earlier by the attorney general's office is pending in court.

(© MMVIII, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.)



CBS

Related Slideshows



[Russians Pick Putin's Successor](#)



[Celebrity Scoops Of The Week: February 24-March 1](#)



[March 2nd: This Week In Celebrity History](#)



[And The Oscar Goes To...](#)



[Pick Of The Litter: Dogs On Display At IKC Chicago Show](#)

Related Stories

[Attorney General Takes Action Against Gas Company \(2/9/2008\)](#)

[Confused Consumers Losing Out On Gas Gamble \(2/8/2008\)](#)

Local News

[Group: Literature Assigned In School 'Child Abuse' Weis Wants Mandatory Fitness Test For Officers](#)

UPDATED
[2 Seriously Injured In Shooting Near Crane H.S.](#)

BREAKING NEWS
[5-Year-Old Girl Killed Near Des Plaines](#)

[\\$1 Million Bond For Alleged Hoffman Estates Killer](#)

Top News Stories

[2 Seriously Injured In Shooting Near Crane H.S.](#)

BREAKING NEWS
[Obama Aide Resigns For Calling Hillary A 'Monster' Weis Wants Mandatory Fitness Test For Officers](#)

UPDATED
[Bush: 'It's Clear Our Economy Has Slowed'](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



What city has the hottest job market in America?



New York



St. Louis



Boston



Minneapolis

[Get the answer >](#)

And see how your city stacks up.

monster®

Our Partners

- CBSnews.com
- CBS.com
- Lake County News-Sun
- Naperville Sun
- Northwest Herald
- Post-Tribune
- Beacon-News
- WBBM 780AM
- ChicagoAtHome

Get More From cbs2chicago.com

- [A Problem With Pyrex](#)
- [Getting Ready For The Switch To Digital TV](#)
- [CBS 2 Fish Fry Guide](#)
- [Unflattering Photos From The Campaign Trail](#)
- [Celebrity Bump Watch](#)

[5-Year-Old Girl Killed Near Des Plaines](#)

[| Advertise](#) |
 [Terms of Service](#) |
 [Privacy Policy](#) |
 [EEO Report](#) |
 [Parent's Guide to TV Ratings](#) |
 [CBS Television Stations Digital Media](#) |
 [Site Map](#)

© MMVIII, CBS Broadcasting, Inc. All Rights Reserved.