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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Johanns Declares April "Saving And Investing Education Month"

LINCOLN – Governor Mike Johanns has proclaimed April as "Saving and Investing Education Month" in the State of Nebraska.

This proclamation is part of a national investor education campaign designed to encourage United States residents to learn about investing basics and protecting themselves against fraudulent investment schemes. This is the fourth year that the Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance - Bureau of Securities, which is the state regulatory agency charged with enforcing securities laws, has participated in the program.

"We encourage Nebraskans to 'invest your time before your money,'" said Sheila Cahill, campaign manager for Nebraska's investor education program, referring to the slogan for the Bureau of Securities. "Most fraud can be avoided by simply being aware of ongoing schemes and educating our residents on the different types of investments and the risks involved."

As part of the investor education campaign, the agency plans to host educational presentations on the basics of investing and investment fraud. Educational materials on different types of investments, investment frauds, saving and retirement are also available and will be distributed throughout the state. The purpose of the campaign, said Cahill, is to educate Nebraska residents about saving and preparing for the future and how to protect themselves from fraud.

"Often, just one call to our department before an investment is made can give an individual vital information to help avoid a financial scam," she said.

The Securities Bureau division of the Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance has a consumer hotline available for Nebraska residents. One call can help a resident determine if his/her securities salesperson, brokerage firm or investment adviser is licensed in Nebraska, find out about any past disciplinary actions, and if an investment is properly registered for sale in the state of Nebraska. Anyone who believes they have been a victim of fraud involving securities, business opportunities or commodities can also contact the Bureau of Securities on the hotline to request a complaint form. The Consumer Protection Hotline is toll-free for Nebraska residents at 877-471-3445.

Sam Baird, director of the Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance, welcomes the participation of the Bureau of Securities division in the nationwide education effort.

"Investor education has never been more important," said Baird. "Today we are a nation of investors. While a generation ago less than 20 percent of households were invested in the stock market, today nearly half of all households own stock."

Individuals or organizations interested in hosting an educational presentation or receiving educational brochures and other materials, should contact Cahill at 402-471-3445. In addition, investor education material is available through the Department's web site at www.ndbf.org by clicking on "Bureau of Securities" and then "Investor Education."

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