

## Protecting Yourself From Investment Fraud

(NAPSA)—Even well-educated and experienced investors can find it difficult to avoid investment fraud.

In fact, studies show that investment fraud victims are typically college-educated males, with above-average income and financial knowledge, who tend to be open to listening to new ideas or sales pitches and may have experienced a recent health or financial setback.

In one such instance, a licensed stockbroker named Steve Sampler invested \$40,000 in an oil well deal. In the end, Sampler's years of experience in the stock market didn't protect him from being a victim of a scam and he lost the entire investment. "If it can happen to me," he said, "it can happen to anyone."

To help combat investment fraud, the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, in collaboration with AARP, state securities regulators and noted fraud experts, developed Outsmarting Investment Fraud, a comprehensive, research-based program that arms investors with the tools and knowledge needed to recognize and prevent investment fraud.

The centerpiece of the program is an hour-long documentary, "Tricks of the Trade: Outsmarting Investment Fraud." Utilizing both humor and compelling stories of real-life victims—including Sampler—and perpetrators, the film explores who is at risk, how fraudsters use persuasion to carry out their schemes and what simple steps investors can take to prevent costly mistakes.

"We found that a majority of investors ages 55 to 65 do not per-



**"A free documentary by the FINRA Investor Education Foundation helps investors identify behaviors that put them at risk for fraud," says Foundation President John Gannon.**

ceive themselves as vulnerable to investment fraud, yet many engage in investment behaviors that put them at risk," according to John Gannon, president of the FINRA Foundation. "The truth is, regardless of age or circumstance, anyone with money is bound to hear from a fraudster at some point."

Gannon encourages organizations and individuals working to protect citizens from financial fraud to watch the film and use it to engage those who are most vulnerable to scams. "Even if you are not at risk for investment fraud," said Gannon, "you probably know someone who is and who could benefit from seeing 'Tricks of the Trade.'"

The film's three-part message of risk, persuasion and prevention has been shown to reduce the incidence of fraud by approximately 50 percent.

To order a free DVD of "Tricks of the Trade" or for more information on avoiding investment fraud, visit [www.SaveAndInvest.org](http://www.SaveAndInvest.org).