



news

Motor
Vehicle Sales Authority
of British Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Self-proclaimed "hobbyist" convicted as illegal car dealer

(BURNABY, B.C., 19 June, 2007) - Glen Aubrey Hanson of Williams Lake pleaded guilty in Provincial Court to a charge of being illegally engaged in the sale of motor vehicles and fined \$2,000.

Hanson, under investigation since 2005, had ignored previous warnings, including a failure to change his behaviour after paying a violation ticket in the amount of \$250.

Unlicensed motor vehicle dealers are commonly referred to as "curbers," usually operating from their homes, and collectively represent hundreds of millions of dollars in vehicle sales each year. The public has no protection from these individuals.

Motor vehicle dealers and salespeople must be licensed in British Columbia by the Motor Vehicle Sales Authority (VSA), under the Motor Dealer Act. Standards of practice are clearly defined and aggrieved consumers have various recourses available if they feel they were mistreated, including the Motor Dealer Customer Compensation Fund.

"Curbers cheat everybody: the responsible licensed dealers with high standards of conduct; the salespeople who pass a certification course and abide by clear codes of conduct; and, the public who most often get considerably less than they are paying for, without any subsequent right to complain or to have grievances addressed," said Judy McRae, the VSA's Manager of Corporate Services and Communication."

Hanson was first brought to the attention of the VSA by Williams Lake motor dealers. Despite Hanson's proclamation that he sold cars only as "a hobby," a subsequent investigation tracked 10 separate sales transactions. After the first violation ticket was paid and Hanson's agreement to cease and desist, not much time passed before motor dealers in the Williams Lake area again noticed his advertising.

This time, the evidence was brought to the Crown Prosecutor and court charges were laid. Hanson pleaded guilty, was fined \$2,000 and ordered to stop selling vehicles. Should he continue now, the next charge to be brought forward would be a much more serious "contempt of court" situation.

"Curber" investigations are difficult because the offenders use a variety of euphemisms to describe their work: hobby, broker, agent, facilitator and others. Hanson's practice involved what are described as "bridging transfers" in which his name appears on no documents. Only the former and new owners' names would appear on the transfer document and vehicle registrations.

"What was so helpful in this case was the vigilance of the Williams Lake dealers who tracked this individual and passed on the information to the VSA," McRae said

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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