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Butler County Auditor's Website Will Now Display Store Verification Results

Auditor's new program will reward the good and identify the bad

HAMILTON, Ohio – Many consumers have experienced that moment when they know they were charged more at the register for a product than what was advertised in the aisle.

By Ohio Statute, it is the duty of the Butler County Auditor's Office to perform price verification inspections on area businesses to ensure consumers are paying the advertised and labeled prices for products. And now, consumers are just a couple of mouse clicks away from finding out which stores are complying with county price verification inspections and which are not.

"Butler County is an excellent place to shop for goods and services. Most stores consistently pass the verification check," says Roger Reynolds, Butler County Auditor.

"However, our office has noticed a substantial increase in failed pricing tests this year."

"By putting the pass/fail verification list online, consumers will have a better idea of which stores are consistently updating their pricing systems," says Reynolds. "I guess you could say it is a naughty and nice list of area businesses regarding price tests."

Residents can go to the Auditor's website at www.butlercountyauditor.org and will see the icon on the home page marked "Store Price Check Results", where the user can click on either the 'pass' page or the 'fail' page.

"In 2010, the percentage of stores failing our scanning inspection stood at 10.9 percent. This year, it has increased to 20.1 percent," notes Tom Kamphaus, Consumer Services Director for the Butler County Auditor's Office. "Stores don't usually mislabel prices on purpose. Staffing cutbacks and constant pricing changes have played a huge part. But the rules still apply, and the consumer must be protected. Our website will be an extra tool for shoppers."

The Auditor's Consumer Services Division runs verification tests on every store that uses an electronic scanning system. The store is given three attempts to comply, so failed results usually means that there is a pricing problem.

The program also recognizes the businesses that achieve a high standard of correct pricing. "Businesses that maintain error-free pricing for three consecutive years will receive a "Certificate of Accuracy" Auditor Reynolds announced. "They can display these certificates in their stores, and we will also recognize these businesses on our website. We are pleased that the majority of retailers maintain good business practices in Butler County."

"Putting the price verification results online and recognizing the stores that are successful in accuracy provides a win-win for the consumer and business," Reynolds said.