



MONTANA STATE AUDITOR

JOHN MORRISON

COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE
COMMISSIONER OF SECURITIES

'OVER FIVE MILLION DOLLARS RECOVERED FOR MONTANA FAMILIES LAST YEAR'

Auditor Morrison Testifies Before the Economic Affairs Interim Committee About Performance of The State Auditor's Office

Helena, Mont., Feb 10, 2006 – In testimony before the Economic Affairs Interim Committee of the Montana State Legislature, State Auditor John Morrison announced over \$5 million was recovered for Montana families and businesses over the past year through the work of his office. The Montana State Auditor's office is a criminal justice agency charged with protecting Montana's consumers through insurance and securities regulation and also through informing the public about insurance and securities issues.

"Putting money back into the pockets of Montana families is one of the most rewarding aspects of this job," said Morrison. "Montanans know they have a place to turn when they have been treated unfairly by the insurance or securities industry. My office investigates and aggressively takes action on insurance and securities complaints and I hope this information sends a clear message to those who would contemplate taking advantage of Montanans."

The State Auditor's Office is the clearinghouse for insurance and securities consumer complaints for Montana. The Office regulates both of these industries and can take a number of actions against those in violation of state law including levying fines, revoking registrations and licenses or working with local law enforcement to take criminal action. The Office also mediates complaints for consumers by contacting companies on behalf of consumers and works to resolve the disputes.

For example, InvestSmart Montana is a program to help Montanans and law enforcement learn about investment fraud and how to spot scams and white collar crime. Funded by a grant from the Investor Protection Trust, InvestSmart Montana blends a unique combination of tools to educate consumers and law enforcement about the pitfalls of investing and helps them to steer clear of frauds and scams.

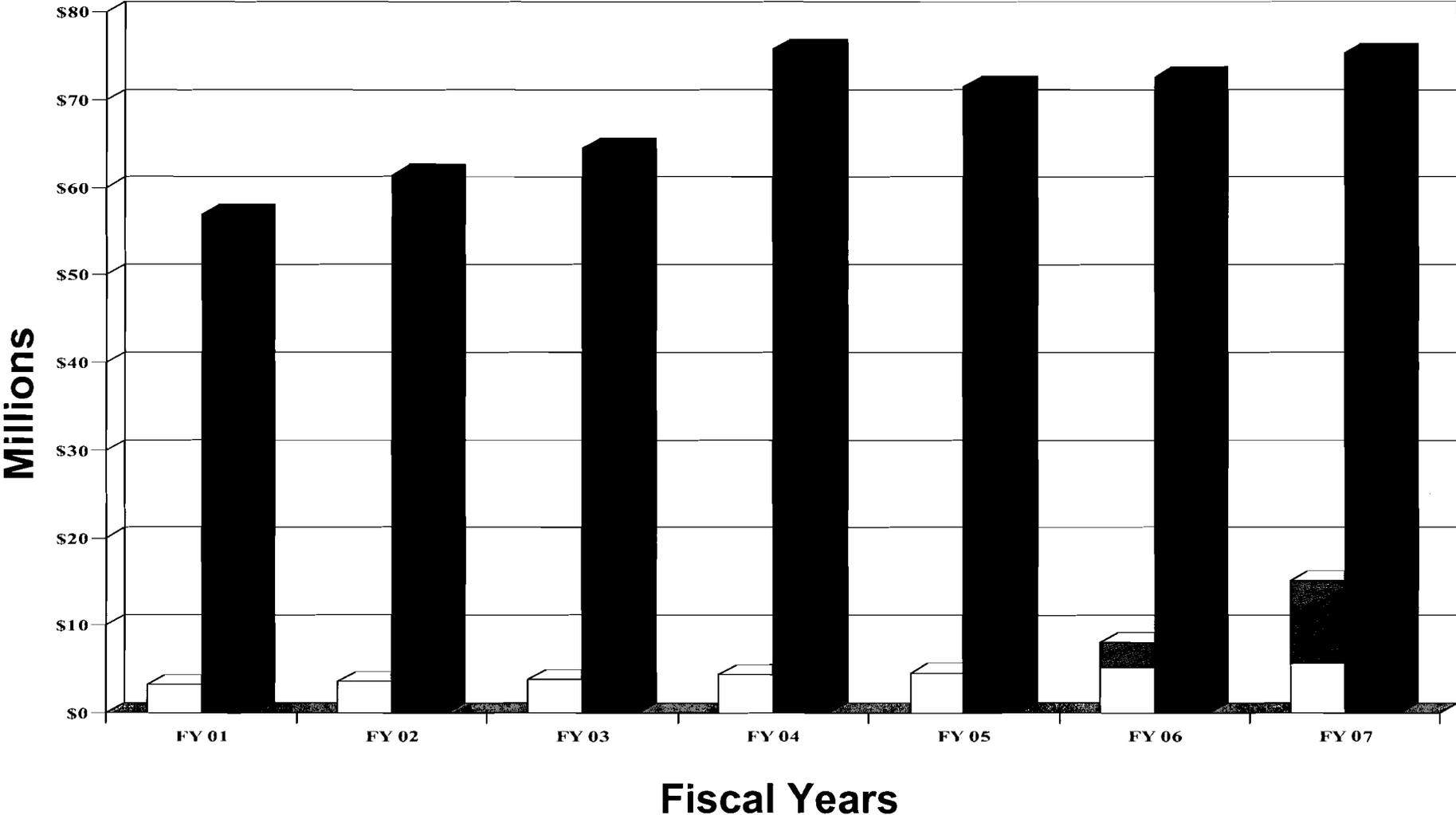
In addition to consumer protection, Morrison and his staff implemented Insure Montana to provide access to more affordable health care to help reduce Montana's uninsured population. During the 2005 session, Morrison's office requested legislation to create a health insurance purchasing pool for uninsured small businesses to leverage better rates. By the end of this fiscal year, Insure Montana is expected to serve approximately 2,500 Montanans. Once fully implemented thousands more are expected to receive assistance with their health insurance as a result of the new law.

Morrison urges consumers to contact the State Auditor's Office at 1-800-332-6148 to register any insurance or securities complaints but also to find out the complaint history against a company before doing business with them. Montanans can also find out more about all State Auditor programs by calling that number or logging onto the website at www.sao.mt.gov.

Economic Affairs Committee Meeting
February 10, 2006

Exhibit #27

Montana State Auditor Revenue and Expenses



Montana State Auditor
John Morrison

	Total Expenses		Total Revenue
	Insure Montana Benefits to Montanans		