



For Immediate Release

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Morrow County Resident Sentenced for Acting as Unlicensed Securities Dealer

(MT. GILEAD, Ohio) – A Morrow County man was sentenced to four years in prison Wednesday for posing as a securities dealer to scam an investor out of \$97,580.

Jerome Lesnick was convicted of acting as an unlicensed securities dealer, a second-degree felony, by Morrow County Judge Tom Elkin. In addition to his prison sentence, Lesnick was also ordered to serve three years of community control upon his release, and pay \$97,580 in restitution to his victim plus court costs.

Lesnick paid the restitution and was immediately remanded into custody by the Morrow County Sheriff's office.

Lesnick pleaded guilty in July following an investigation and referral by the Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of Securities. He convinced an Ohio investor he would secure \$300,000 in funding to help the investor's business stay afloat in return for the investment. Instead of obtaining the funding, Lesnick used the money for his personal use. The investor was forced to close his business after the promised return of funding did not come through.

The case was prosecuted by the Morrow County Prosecutors Office of Thomas Smith, and presented by Daniel Staley, assistant prosecuting attorney.

Before investing, the Division of Securities encourages potential investors to call the Division's Investor Protection Hotline at 877-683-7841 to ask:

- Is the brokerage firm and salesperson licensed to sell securities in Ohio?
- Have any enforcement actions been taken against them?
- Has the security been properly registered with the Division of Securities?

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*The **Division of Securities** is part of the Ohio Department of Commerce. The department is Ohio's chief regulatory agency, focused on promoting prosperity and protecting what matters most to Ohioans. We ensure businesses follow the laws that help them create jobs and keep Ohioans safe. To learn more about what we do, visit our website at www.com.ohio.gov.*

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