

Better Business Bureau releases investigative study on counterfeits



National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center Director Steve Francis joined officials from the Better Business Bureau (BBB) in Buffalo, New York for the release of a BBB investigative study on counterfeits. The study is being released in several other cities including St. Louis, Chicago, Dallas, Omaha, and San Francisco.

The study, entitled *“Fakes Are Not Fashionable: A BBB Study of the Epidemic of Counterfeit Goods Sold Online,”* takes a close look at the proliferation of counterfeit consumer goods and the criminal elements that circulate them. The study also assesses the scope of the problem, who is behind them, the multi-pronged fight to stop them and the steps consumers can take to avoid their dangerous risks.

“We applaud the Better Business Bureau for its efforts to help us inform and educate the public about the dangers of counterfeit merchandise and, more importantly, the need to convince consumers to avoid them,” Francis told the BBB gathering in Buffalo. He also spoke about the overall U.S. intellectual property policy and strategy of the Office of the U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, which helps guide the work of the Center.

“The goal is to ensure a level playing field for American innovators and creators, where their innovations and creations are respected and protected, and for systems to be in place that allow American businesses to operate in a free, fair and open marketplace.”

Francis was joined at the event by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Buffalo Special Agent in Charge Kevin Kelly.

“HSI is proud to partner with the public and private sector to raise awareness about the health and safety threats that counterfeit goods represent to the American public,” said Kelly. “Consumers must be the first line of defense against these threats.”

The Better Business Bureau, founded in 1912, is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is focused on advancing marketplace trust. The organization consists of 106 independently incorporated local BBB organizations in the United States and Canada. Nearly 400,000 local businesses in North America are accredited by the BBB.

For more information on the study on counterfeits, please visit:

<https://www.bbb.org/article/news-releases/19860-fakes-are-not-fashionable-a-bbb-study-of-the-epidemic-of-counterfeit-goods-sold-online>

The survey can also be viewed on www.iprcenter.gov

Photo I-to-r: National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center Director Steve Francis; Better Business Bureau of Upstate New York President and CEO Warren Clark; U.S. Attorney J P Kennedy; HSI Group Supervisor Martin Stanford; HSI (Buffalo) Special Agent in Charge Kevin Kelly; New Era Cap Company Senior VP of Global Legal and Brand Protection Lorrie Turner; HSI Buffalo Deputy Special Agent in Charge Matthew Scarpino

