Chief of the Month: Mark Mattioli, Assistant Attorney General, Consumer Protection Chief, Montana Attorney General’s Office

Each month, the Center for Consumer Protection will provide an article about an Attorney General’s Office Consumer Protection Chief.

I tell people I’m one part lawyer and two parts fly fisherman: My daughter Madison prosecutes for the Montana Attorney General’s Office and my sons Max and Marcus are employed in the fly-fishing industry. Apparently, I taught them what I love too well. A proud native of Montana, I was born and raised in Butte, Montana—a blue-collar mining town with a rich history and a community bond and spirit that, if it were replicated nationwide, would be medicine for our ills. Growing up in Butte, I had two heroes who I knew had been lawyers, one from history—Abraham Lincoln—and another who was then living—Robert F. Kennedy. Thus, from a young age, I wanted to be a lawyer.

The Office of Consumer Protection is relatively new. Though I am only Montana’s third Consumer Protection Chief and have been in this job for a little over three years, neither of my two predecessors served longer. My prior legal background is varied, including time as a partner in an insurance defense firm and as a prosecutor. And in my over 22 years with the Montana Attorney General’s Office, I’ve had stints as appellate chief and as chief deputy. This, however, has been my most rewarding job. Our small team here consists of dedicated public servants motivated by actually helping people. In addition to working with our talented Crime Victim Compensation Program—which includes one of the best domestic violence fatality review teams in the country—our principal responsibilities include Montana and multistate-based Consumer Protection investigations and litigation; antitrust enforcement; diligent enforcement of the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and related litigation; nonprofit oversight; and, charitable trust work.

Montana is also committed to public education, especially reaching older persons. In percentage terms, Montana is the oldest state in the West—a demographic that continues to grow exponentially. Older persons, as you know, are uniquely vulnerable. Apart from the circumstance that as a group they possess most of the wealth in this country, they are prone to living in relative social isolation, experience physical and cognitive declines, and they come from a safer, less technology-driven time when people trusted one another enough to leave the doors of their homes unlocked. It is our mission to help and protect these good citizens. Recently we were reminded
how consequential our mission is after receiving a complaint from an elderly victim of a lottery scam who tragically sent over $1 million in cash overseas. Unfortunately, we will never be able to prevent all fraud and deception. Consequently, we’re always looking for innovative ways to marshal our limited resources to do a better job educating and protecting the people we serve.

Montana, as they say, is the Last Best Place. This is so, not just because of Montana’s unmatched beauty, but also due to the goodness and humility of her people. It’s an honor to serve and protect Montanans. You feel the same about your state, and that’s another reason my work is so gratifying.