



NEWS

From the Office of the New York State Inspector General
Joseph Fisch

Contact: Kate Gurnett
(518) 474-1010
kate.gurnett@ig.state.ny.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 2, 2010
[View Report](#)

Public Information Director Eavesdropped After He Was Fired, Inspector General Finds

A report by Inspector General Joseph Fisch concluded that John Charlson, former Public Information Officer for the state Division of the Lottery (Lottery), eavesdropped on a confidential management meeting and accessed the Lottery's computer network after he was fired, in an attempt to retaliate against his former bosses.

The Inspector General found that Charlson, 46, of Saratoga Springs, sought to embarrass and discredit Lottery officials after he was fired on Jan. 13, 2009, telling Lottery Director Gordon Medenica upon his departure that, "you're going to be sorry." Charlson was fired for failing to "team" with other Lottery employees, although as a non-civil service employee, he could be terminated without cause. He had worked at Lottery for two years and earned an annual salary of \$148,128.

Specifically, the Inspector General found that after he was fired, Charlson:

1. Trespassed via computer to retrieve 16 Lottery e-mails and forward out-of-context information on VLTs to Racing and Wagering Board Chairman John Sabini.
2. Eavesdropped on Lottery officials and vendors on Jan. 20, 2009, by using his former state code to dial into the Tuesday morning executive meeting and conference call.
3. Lodged numerous serious, yet baseless, allegations against Lottery officials in retaliation for his dismissal.

Since some of Charlson's conduct may be criminal or unethical, the Inspector General forwarded his report to the Saratoga County District Attorney's Office and the state Commission on Public Integrity for review.

In addition to Charlson, the Inspector General also concluded that Lottery officials behaved inappropriately by giving surplus \$250 leather duffel bags to employees in a purported promotional effort. Those bags should have been surplus to the state Office of General Services, the report states.

###