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**ATTORNEY GENERAL TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE
LEAD HAZARDS IN CHITTENDEN AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES**

Twenty-seven landlords in Chittenden and Washington Counties are the recipients of letters from the Office of Vermont Attorney General William H. Sorrell requesting that they demonstrate compliance with the Vermont lead law. Attorney General Sorrell announced today that his office recently mailed the letters requesting information on rental properties built prior to 1978. Landlords have been given 90 days to show that they are in compliance with the law.

“These letters continue the lead poisoning prevention efforts of my office state-wide,” said Attorney General Sorrell. “We have already sent letters to landlords in ten counties and there was an 18% increase in lead compliance filings in 2009. Hopefully, that trend will continue.”

The mailings to thirteen Chittenden County landlords and fourteen Washington County landlords continue a state-wide initiative of the Attorney General’s Office, and mark the second time that letters have been mailed to landlords in Chittenden County. Similar letters were mailed to Burlington landlords in early 2009, and have already been sent to landlords in Rutland, Windsor, Orange, Franklin, Windham, Bennington, and the three Northeast Kingdom counties.

“Lead poisoning is a serious, but preventable problem in Vermont and we know that most Vermont landlords want to make their housing safe for their tenants,” said Attorney General

Sorrell. “These letters provide Vermont landlords with the opportunity to work with us to ensure that their properties are safe and in compliance with Vermont law.”

Additionally, the Attorney General’s Office announced that its Consumer Assistance Program (“CAP”) will begin accepting housing complaints from tenants as of February 1st.

More information on CAP and housing is available on the CAP website:

<http://www.uvm.edu/consumer>. Vermont landlords should be aware that when CAP receives housing complaints, it will confirm that landlords who are the subject of tenant complaints are in compliance with Vermont’s lead in housing law. Landlords who are not will have 90 days to come into compliance and notify the Attorney General’s Office.

For information concerning Vermont’s lead in housing law, the duties of owners, managers, and sellers of pre-1978 housing, and for copies of court documents from recent enforcement actions involving lead, see the Attorney General’s website at:

<http://www.atg.state.vt.us> and click on “Lead.”