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OCC Announces New Consumer Hotline
1-800-613-6743

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) today announced a new toll-free hotline service to respond to consumer inquiries about national bank laws and regulations and to assist customers of national banks with the consumer complaint process.

"It's important for the health of the national banking system that customer problems be dealt with, and it's important for people to know that their government is genuinely listening," said Comptroller of the Currency Eugene A. Ludwig.

The hotline is staffed by the agency's newly created Customer Assistance Unit, which is managed by Lillian A. Curley. Prior to joining the OCC in September 1995, Ms. Curley was director of the Washington, D.C. office of the Organization for a New Equality.

The OCC's Customer Assistance technicians will answer questions, offer guidance and assist in resolving consumer complaints by acting as a liaison between customers and national banks. The agency can sometimes suggest ways for consumers to resolve problems directly with their bank, but cannot resolve factual or contractual disputes between the bank and the customer.

In 1994, the OCC received over 38,000 written complaints and telephone inquiries from national banks' customers. Nearly half involved bank lending -- and 20 percent involved credit cards. Another 20 percent involved deposit accounts.

The OCC is responsible for ensuring that national banks comply with all banking laws, including federal consumer protection laws and fair lending laws.

The OCC has also published a brochure describing the OCC's customer assistance function. For a copy of the brochure write to: Customer Assistance Brochure, Mail Stop 3-9, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Washington, D.C. 20219. To speak to a customer assistance technician, call 1-800-613-6743. Consumers can also send e-mail messages on the Internet to: consumer.complaint@occ.treas.gov.

Note to editors: The OCC is also offering a video news release with sound bites and b-roll, including interviews with Comptroller Ludwig and Lillian Curley. For information on satellite feed times or to request a hard-copy videotape, contact Susan Stolov at (202) 638-3400.

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The OCC charters, regulates and examines approximately 3,000 national banks and 70 federal branches and agencies of foreign banks in the U.S., accounting for more than half the nation's banking assets. Its mission is to ensure the safety and soundness of the national banking system.