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7 Day Forecast

StormTrack 9 Radar



CURRENT CONDITIONS: Chattanooga Airport

Mostly Cloudy and 52.0 F (11.1 C)
Wind: Southeast at 4.6 MPH (4 KT)
Dewpoint: 28.9 F (-1.7 C)
Pressure: 1023.5 mb
Last Updated: 2010-11-28 12:20:07

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BBB Assures Consumers System is Fair

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Can Consumers Trust BBB Ratings?

BBB makes a change to inspire more confidence

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Come Friday morning shoppers will be out in full force. But the agency that advocates for consumers recently took a beating. An ABC News investigation calls into question the rating system used by the Better Business Bureau.

"We've been in a negative light for a few days," says Chattanooga BBB President Jim Winsett. And that's a hard pill for him to swallow. For nearly 100 years, his nonprofit agency has been a watchdog for consumers. "As people are getting ready to spend their money," says Winsett, "they want to make sure that they're spending it with somebody they can trust and that they can depend on."

That trust though was put in jeopardy by that investigation. It circles around the BBB's new grading system, put in place in January 2009. It gives companies anywhere from an A plus to an F. Even celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck had trouble making the grade. "If you become a member you're sure to get an A," Puck told ABC News, "but if you don't pay it's very difficult to get an A." Winsett agrees the appearance might not have looked so good. "What that system did do is it did give recognition to our membership base with a higher grade than just a regular business that was not a member," he explains.

In all, 17 factors go into rating each business. One of those included paying members receiving an automatic four points, leading some to ask whether the system is a so-called pay to play game. Winsett insists that's not the case and that the extra points didn't guarantee a member an A grade. But now there won't be any question. "We're eliminating that (four points)," explains Winsett. "What we really are doing is we're adding those points to every business."

Winsett hopes that brings confidence back to consumers and the Better Business Bureau can get back to business as usual, which is helping holiday shoppers make the most out of their money.

The Better Business Bureau also rates charities for those in the giving mood this holiday season. [Click here](#) before you choose which one gets your donations.

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GMC Survey of the Day

What's your favorite Thanksgiving food?

- Turkey!
- Dressing!
- Sweet potatoes!
- Pie!

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