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### **Scam Alert – Deed Services** by Stacie Harris, Economic Crimes Unit

This scam comes up every year and our office would like to warn you regarding mailings from a service, National Deed Service, Inc., providing certified copies of homeowners deeds for an exorbitant amount. At that time, the company was charging in the neighborhood of \$69.50.

The Pueblo County District Attorney's Office and the Clerk and Recorder's Office receive numerous complaints each year about these type of mailings being received within our community, again.

What you, as the consumer, need to be aware of is that you may obtain the same information at the Clerk and Recorder's Office at a cost of .25 cents per page (\$1.25 per page if prior to 1993). A certified copy costs \$1 extra. Most deeds are between 1 to 15 pages. That is a big difference from the \$49.50 or \$69.50 that the mailing is soliciting for their service.

There is more concern about the mechanisms of payment accepted by these types of companies. By sharing your personal bank account information or credit card number with someone you don't know, you run a bigger risk of also becoming a victim of identity theft.

While there have been several complaints to the Better Business Bureau in several cities, a previous investigative research into the practices of National Deed Service, Inc. has shown that while their pricing for something that would only cost you mere dollars is questionable, its practices are not illegal. Their website clearly states and acknowledges that the information they provide may be obtained at a much lower cost from a government entity. Their claim is that you are paying for the convenience of not having to make a trip to your local county courthouse.

An employee of the Clerk and Recorders Office stated that most of the people that are receiving these type of mailings are regarding homes that have been recorded within the last 6 months to a year, either from new purchases to ones that have had quit claim deeds filed on them. Home ownership records are available to the public and this may be where the company is finding its information to target the public.

It is recommended that you research any company and any cost associated for their services before doing business with them.

***~ IDENTIFY A SCAM BEFORE A SCAM IDENTIFIES YOU! ~***