

FRAUD ALERT

“Certified” Property Deed Scam

Several St. Louis residents have recently received written letters from National Record Service, Inc. in Northbrook, Illinois offering to sell the resident a “certified” copy of his or her property deed for \$59.50. The letter cites the Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) website as advising all property owners “to have an official or certified copy of their deed.” National Record Service, Inc. even offers to provide an additional copy of the certified deed for \$20.00.

The Fraud Prevention Taskforce’s search of the FCIC website revealed the text cited by National Record Service to be a 2003 consumer focus article entitled “Managing Household Records.” This article does encourage homeowners to retain a copy of the deed to their property. However, the website continues to state that “it is not necessary to use a private company to obtain a certified copy of the deed to your home.. You can obtain one from your local Register of Deeds for free or at low cost.”

Peggy Meeker at the St. Louis Recorder of Deeds Office confirms that her office offers copies of property deeds at a cost of \$5.00 for the first page and \$3.00 for additional pages. Copies can be obtained at the office or by telephone at (314) 622-3547.

Another helpful service offered by the Recorder of Deeds is the “Property Fraud Alert.” According to the FBI, property and mortgage fraud- in which a criminal forges a document to make it appear as if he is the homeowner- is the fastest growing white collar crime. Property Fraud Alerts immediately notify a homeowner if a con artist attempts to file a fraudulent claim to his or her property. To sign up for this service, call 314-622-3547, or visit:

www.propertyfraudalert.com/cityofstlouismo



*To Pursue Justice For All Citizens Within The Highest
Standards Of Ethical Behavior And Professionalism*

Fraud Assistance Hotline: (314) 612-1412

Office Phone: (314) 622-4941

Fax: (314) 622-3369