

Senior Fraud Alert—April 8, 2008



Don't pay for overpriced property deeds—AG Cooper warns

Scheme charges inflated prices for public documents

Raleigh: Attorney General Roy Cooper reminds North Carolina homeowners not to fall for a scheme that charges inflated prices for certified copies of property deeds that often are available from your county governments for free or for a small fee.

Cooper's office first received reports of this scheme in 2007 from local Registers of Deeds and consumers indicating that National Deed Service, Inc. of Washington, DC sent thousands of letters to North Carolina homeowners offering to provide them with a certified copy of their property deed for \$59 to \$89. **The Register of Deeds in most counties will provide a copy of these deeds for a fee of less than \$10.**

"Watch out for companies that want you to pay them for something you can get for little or no money elsewhere," Cooper warns. "Property deeds are public records you can get from your local Register of Deeds. If you get one of these notices, remember that you don't need to pay this company for a copy of your deed."

The Attorney General's Office recommends that if you who want copies of deeds to any property you own, contact your local Register of Deeds. Most homeowners receive a copy of their deed at closing. Some counties also allow you to view deeds for free via their Web site. In many cases, you may not need a certified copy of your deed and may instead print a scanned copy from your county's Web site for free.

If you have complaints about National Deed Service or similar businesses you may file a complaint with Cooper's Consumer Protection Division by calling toll free 1-877-5-NO-SCAM or by visiting www.ncdoj.gov to download a complaint form.

