

# CONSUMER ALERT!

From the Office of Jefferson/Gilpin Counties  
District Attorney Scott Storey



## **Beware! Home Improvement and Repair Scams**

Spring means repairing damage caused by the harsh winter. It is prime time for 'Travelers' or home improvement scam artists to approach homeowners, especially the elderly.

These con artists often find their victims by driving up-and-down neighborhoods looking for people working in their yard. They often sport new pick-up trucks with an out-of-state or temporary license plate and temporary magnetic business signs attached to the door of the truck. They will approach an individual in a yard to "warn" them about a problem with their roof or guttering, about limbs of trees that should be removed, or cracks in sidewalks and driveways. They may offer a 'special deal' or cut rate price because they just finished a job and happen to have some materials left over from that job. They may provide a lowball quote and may ask for a down payment up front; should the victim provide money before any work is done, they may never see this individual again. Sometimes they inflate the original quote once the work is done and can sound demanding or threatening if challenged about the 'new price.' Almost always the work done is shoddy or sub-par and must be re-done by a competent home repair business.

Because Colorado does not have a State Contractor's Licensing Board, a consumer must expend the effort to check out any business representation prior to allowing any work to be done on their property.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Call the local Better Business Bureau for references;
- Get referrals from friends who have had satisfactory work done on their home;
- Get a written contract, at least three different bids, and don't be pressured into paying more than expressed in the contract;
- Don't pay money up front for materials or pay the material's vendor directly;
- Never allow any stranger, including a door-to-door contractor, into your home—they may use the opportunity to steal personal information & valuables;
- Call local law enforcement if you hear of home improvement trucks cruising through your neighborhood.

**Fraud Hotline: 303-271-6980**