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Public Information
303-271-6905

RE: Six Month Investigation into Jeffco Human Services LEAP Results
in Charges Against Seven

Jefferson County District Attorney Dave Thomas announced today that his office is filing criminal charges against seven people accused of fraudulently accessing money available through the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP). The total loss to the program is alleged to be \$33,500. The Program is administered through the Jefferson County Division of Human Services (DHS).

The complex investigation took the Golden Police Department, investigators for the DHS and the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office six months. It covers the three-year period that LEAP records are maintained.

This program runs October through April and provides assistance for low-income residents of Jefferson County with their energy bills or for emergency furnace repairs. The maximum annual award for help with energy bills is \$700 per winter.

The charges filed against the various individuals include forgery, theft, embezzlement and theft from the elderly. While the investigation did not indicate that the defendants had acted in concert, there were statements that indicate that there may have been some knowledge of the fraudulent practices among the participants.

Of the seven charged, four were employed as seasonal workers with the program, one was an employee of Jeffco DHS in Support Services, and the other two were friends of two of the season workers.

Dolly Ann Grismore-Davis, DOB: 11-11-54, of Arvada, was the lead worker for LEAP and is being charged with the following: 7 counts of theft (F4); 36 counts of forgery (F5); and 19 counts of embezzlement (F5). Grismore-Davis had worked with the Program for 11 years and is accused of having fraudulently filled out applications and taken LEAP funds (\$23,000) for her own personal gain, and also for the benefit of friends of hers.

Holly C. Topliss, DOB: 6-9-74, of Louisville, was an eligibility technician with the Program. She will be charged with 6 counts of theft (F4), 8 counts of forgery (F5), and 6 counts of embezzlement (F5). Topliss is accused of having fraudulently applied for LEAP benefits (\$5,800) in the names and addresses of family members who live out of state, and then using them for her own benefit.

Cindy Ann Guzman, DOB: 7-21-61, of Littleton, was an eligibility technician with the Program. She will be charged with 3 counts of forgery (F5) and 3 counts of embezzlement (F5). Gardner is accused of having fraudulently submitted three LEAP applications in the name of her 18-year-old daughter who lives on her college campus, but occasionally stays in the family basement. Guzman is accused of having created a fraudulent address for the daughter and using the funds for her/their benefit (\$1,600).

Sophia Gardner, DOB: 9-29-44, of Denver, was an eligibility technician with the Program. She will be charged with 1 count of theft (F4), 1 count of theft (M2), 2 counts of forgery (F5), 2 counts of embezzlement (F5), 1 count of conspiracy to commit Theft (F5), 1 count of conspiracy to commit forgery (F6) and 1 count of conspiracy to commit embezzlement (F6). Gardner is accused of having fraudulently applied for LEAP benefits for her deceased husband and her son, who lived with her, and using them for her household (\$1,062). She is also accused of having forged a note from her deceased husband.

Margaret Irene Woods, DOB: 12-23-52, of Lakewood, worked in Support Services at the DHS. She will be charged with theft of an at-risk adult (F3) and theft (F4). Woods lives in a house at 1965 Jay Street, Lakewood, that she purchased from her mother 10 years ago. Her 82-year-old mother has since that time lived in a house just down the street. Her mother was entitled to and received LEAP benefits at 1965 Jay Street. Each year LEAP applications are sent to addresses where benefits have previously been awarded. As LEAP applications continued to be received at the 1965 Jay Street residence, Woods is alleged to have fraudulently submitted the application for that address, in her mother's name, and used the benefits (\$800) towards payment of her personal heating bills.

Linda Oday, DOB: 11-12-56, of Arvada, is a neighbor of Dolly Grismore-Davis. She has been charged with 1 count of theft (F4), 1 count of conspiracy to commit theft (F5), 2 counts of conspiracy to commit forgery (F6), theft (M2) and conspiracy to commit theft (M3). Oday is accused of having, with Grismore-Davis, fraudulently applied for and benefited from LEAP funds (\$1,000).

The six people above will be issued a summons from the Jefferson County District Court and their first court appearance date will be available at that time.

Melissa Oday, DOB: 6-20-80, of Arvada, is the daughter of Linda Oday. She has been issued a misdemeanor summons for theft (\$362) for having fraudulently applied for and benefited from LEAP funds. Her first court appearance will be December 11, at 1:15 in Courtroom 1B the Jefferson County Courthouse.