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Contact: Pam Russell
Public Information
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RE: Court Appearance for Five of the Seven Charged in Jeffco Human Services LEAP Fraud Investigation

Five codefendants (Dolly Grismore-Davis, Linda Oday, Holly Topliss, Margaret Woods and Sophia Gardner) appeared today in Jefferson County District Court for their first advisement. They each appeared with their attorneys and were instructed to go to the Sheriff's Office to be fingerprinted and their next court appearance, a dispositional hearing, was set for February 20, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. in Division B of the Jefferson County Court. Two others have also been charged, Cindy Guzman and Melissa Oday. Guzman, also charged with felonies, has a dispositional hearing set for February 12 at 2:00 p.m. and Melissa Oday, charged with a misdemeanor, has a pre-trial conference set for March 24 at 3:00 p.m. (both in Division B).

Early in November, District Attorney Dave Thomas filed 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). 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 complex investigation took the Golden Police Department, investigators for the DHS and the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office six months. It covered the three-year period that LEAP records are maintained.

The charges filed against the various individuals include forgery, theft, and embezzlement.. 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 seasonal workers.

Dolly Ann Grismore-Davis, DOB: 11-11-54, of Arvada, was the lead worker for LEAP and was charged with the following: seven 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 her friends.

Holly C. Topliss, DOB: 6-9-74, of Louisville, was an eligibility technician with the Program. She was charged with six counts of theft (F4), eight counts of forgery (F5), and six 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 was charged with three counts of forgery (F5) and three 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 was charged with one count of theft (F4), one count of theft (M2), two counts of forgery (F5), two counts of embezzlement (F5), one

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 was charged with one count of theft (F4) and embezzlement (F5). 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 one count of theft (F4), one count of conspiracy to commit theft (F5), two 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 were issued felony summonses from the Jefferson County District Court.

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.