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**For Immediate Release – June 9, 2004**

**Contact:** Pam Russell  
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**RE:** DA Dave Thomas Warns Homeowners to Beware of Travelers  
Offering Unsolicited Bid for Repair of Hail Damage

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Jefferson County District Attorney Dave Thomas is reminding homeowners that the return of spring hail storms brings with it a risk to vulnerable homeowners posed by the Travelers. These experienced home repair scam artists often prey on elderly and at-risk adults, but everyone should be wary of unsolicited bids for roof or other home repair. Homeowners are encouraged to ask for references and/or check with the Better Business Bureau before entering into a contract with a home repair company.

According to economic crime experts, Travelers are intergenerational, professional thieves who often have received training in swindling techniques from their fathers and grandfathers. They travel from state to state and city to city offering home repair “deals” to often vulnerable and unsuspecting consumers. They follow hail storms, flooding, fires, etc., targeting residential neighborhoods and elderly residents. The preferred victim is a middle-class homeowner, over 60-years-old, who is unable to see or hear well. But, anyone can be targeted.

The philosophy of the so-called Travelers, a group of close to 30,000 criminals involved in home repair frauds in the U.S. and Canada, is “The

gullible were put on the earth to be gulled,” according to a report issued by The California Department of Justice. “Buyer, beware,” says Greg Neal, Investigator for the First Judicial District Attorney’s Economic Crime Unit. “Home owners should be weary of Travelers and should recognize unsolicited persons wanting to perform home repairs as a possible red flag.”

Travelers are generally polite, persuasive, and will offer any type of guarantee to the homeowner in order to make a sale. Their vehicles are normally new, clean, and contain well-maintained equipment. They are highly active between the months of April – October. Some of the jobs they perform include but are not limited to roof/coating repair, asphalt paving, driveway sealing, house and barn painting, tree pruning, landscaping, home invasion, burglary and auto body scams. Colorado residents are most affected by Travelers performing asphalt scams. Travelers will show-up at a victim’s door with dump trucks and rollers, quote a cheap price based on square footage, and seal the driveway with the same material used for coating roofs. After the job is complete, the Traveler will inform the victim that the original quote didn’t include labor. The asphalt paving material is applied very thin and will crumble within a short time.

Please contact your local law enforcement agency if you suspect any Traveler-type scams.

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