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DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Jefferson and Gilpin Counties

For Immediate Release February 10, 2005

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Public Information
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RE: Margaret Woods Acquitted of Theft from LEAP

After two days of trial and five hours of deliberation, a Jefferson County jury found Margaret Irene Woods, DOB: 12-23-52, not guilty of theft (a class 4 felony) and embezzlement (a class 5 felony). Woods, who lives in Lakewood, was one of seven women charged with theft from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) in Jefferson County in the fall of 2003.

An employee of the Jefferson County Department of Human Services at the time she was charged, Woods lives in a house at 1965 Jay Street, Lakewood, that she purchased from her 82-year-old mother 10 years ago. Her mother, Dorothy Swan, has since that time lived in a house two doors down the street. Swan 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 was accused of having fraudulently submitted the application for that address, in her mother's name, and used the benefits (\$800) towards payment of her personal heating bills. While county records show that Margaret Woods was the owner of the house at 1965 Jay Street, defense witnesses said that the her mother, Dorothy Swan, lived at that house as well as a second house two doors down.

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