



Senior Siren

July—August, 2011

Volume 3, Issue 4

Special points of interest:

- The Arvada Police Dept. created the Senior Liaison Officer position to address the needs of our city's senior population.
- Most crimes against seniors involve financial exploitation — that include frauds, scams, and cons.
- The Lockbox Program provides a house key for emergency medical responders in the event the senior cannot get to the door.

Sorry, there is nothing we can do.

I dislike saying those words as much as you dislike hearing them. It can be very frustrating to hear. Every other week though, I have to remind a caller that I am a *law enforcement officer, not an attorney*. The department does not allow officers to give legal advice. Still though, for whatever reason, I end up with a whole myriad of legal questions and requests all the time.

So, if a contractor does shoddy work on a home project for you or he doesn't finish the job, you can call me, but I will have to refer you to the Better Business Bureau, Colorado Attorney General's Office or the attorney section in the yellow pages. I cannot go out, threaten the guy or arrest him. Same thing applies if one of your parents signs a work order and/or estimate for a brand new walk-in tub that costs a whole lot more than you think it should. These are civil situations and you need legal help from an attorney, not a police officer. Again, we are not allowed to give legal advice or act as a "bully" toward a bad contractor.

From my personal experience, I can recommend that you never give a contractor money until the job is finished and you are happy with the work done. I can also recommend that everyone stay in touch with their respective family members and friends so you are available when they are considering home construction changes or large purchases. So many of the civil problems I hear about could have been avoided if just one family member or friend was there for assistance and suggestions. Our senior citizens grew up during a time when they could trust most people. We are not living in that time any longer. Unethical work practices are very common today, but I cannot arrest and charge someone for being unethical. Pursuing those dishonest people with an attorney and legal action is the best and most effective thing you can do. You might also find ways to make the public aware of the unethical business person like contacting Tom Martino or your favorite news channel.

Please stay alert and watch out for your family and friends. They need you and someday you might need them as well.

There is nothing we can do **1**

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Don Sikkema

Jefferson County District Attorney Scott Storey Presents

COMMUNITY SAFETY AWARENESS DAY



Safety Fair

August 27, 2011

Saturday

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Jefferson County Fairgrounds

SAVE THE DATE!

**We have rented the entire Exhibit Hall
at the Fairgrounds!**

No crowded aisles!

Comfortable room for 89 vendor booths!

**Looking for new vendors and
new safety features**

**Expanded activities for children
and families**

Free On-Site

- ◆ Shredding, electronics recycling (small fee for large items) and Prescription Round-Up.
- ◆ Children's Bicycle Rodeo with free bike helmet.
- ◆ Credit report printed & reviewed by a bank officer.
- ◆ Live safety presentations all day.
- ◆ Giveaways, children's activities, DNA/fingerprint identification kits

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participate:*
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Next **Power Against Fraud Seminar** with Cary Johnson from the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office. **September 14th, 2011 at the Community Recreation Center, 6842 Wadsworth Blvd.** Program will begin at **1:00 pm**. Snacks & drinks provided. Gather your friends and family members who have not heard this information and please bring them. We can beat the criminals. **Knowledge is Power!**

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Upcoming Events -- An Invitation to TRIAD!

Meetings are held at the Jefferson County District Attorney's Conference Room, 500 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden

Independence Day: Keeping Mobile in Your Later Years

Tuesday, July 26, 1:30 pm

Do you fear giving up your car or taking your driver's test because you're not sure you will pass? A representative from the Division of Motor Vehicles will answer your questions about how they assess older drivers, and then the Seniors' Resource Center will talk about local transportation options. DRMAC will provide information on "Getting There" and resources for the visually impaired.

Criminal Justice 101

Tuesday, August 23, 1:30 pm

Very interesting discussion on the process and timeline for criminal cases. We'll cover what happens from the point of the crime to prosecution. Join us as officers, victim advocates and prosecutors share information and experiences.

Everyone is invited! Bring a Friend!

Share this invitation with your community.

TRIAD is an organization built on a cooperative relationship between **Senior Community Members**, the **District Attorney**, **Law Enforcement** and **Senior Service Providers** all concerned about the safety and security of seniors living in Jefferson & Gilpin Counties.

Looking for a FREE "911" cell phone? Call 303-271-6980

Come to a

TRIAD meeting!

It is a chance to

learn and share

valuable crime

fighting information!

Scam of the Month



From the desk of Don Sikkema, Senior Liaison Officer, Arvada Police Department

Criminal Investigations Unit
8101 Ralston Road
Arvada, Colorado 80002

Phone: 720-898-6724
Scam Hotline: 720-898-6739
Email:
dsikkema@arvada.org



Foreign Lotteries

The scam: Congratulations! Via a phone call, letter, or email, you're informed that you've won a lottery held in another country, even though you never entered the contest nor set foot in that country. Sometimes these messages earnestly "explain" that disparity: A relative or a friend of yours happened to be visiting Jamaica, Australia, Spain, England or some other foreign country and generously bought a lottery ticket in your behalf. At other times, you may receive an authentic-looking check in the mail. No matter the method, there's always a catch: "in order to avoid unnecessary delays," you are directed to pay a fee of several thousand dollars for "processing charges," "shipping and handling," "insurance," or "taxes."

You will usually be instructed to send this fee abroad via Western Union. **DON'T DO IT.** Once you do, that money is beyond the jurisdiction of U.S.-based law enforcement and beyond recovering. Oftentimes, "winners" who send money are contacted a second time with-incredibly-more "good" news: Their prize is larger than originally thought, they are informed, so more money is needed for additional insurance, taxes or whatever. If you receive a check, it usually is for a portion of your total prize—say, the first \$10,000 on your "million-dollar" award. The instructions are to deposit it in your bank account, then send back a portion of that amount to cover expenses. But that check is counterfeit—a discovery that will likely not be made for days or weeks after the check has been deposited. And the portion you sent to cover

"expenses" is very real—and really lost.

Rip-off tip-off: Authentic lotteries never require up-front fees (other than the cost of a ticket) in order to be claimed. What's more, it's illegal for U.S. citizens to play—much less win—a foreign lottery; this should be a dead giveaway of the falsity of claims alleging to originate with the Federal Trade Commission, the Internal Revenue Service or the U.S. Customs Service.

The real clue: Bona fide lotteries are typically managed by governmental entities within a particular state or nation. Yet foreign-lottery scams often note that your "winnings" will be paid out by a bank in another country. Claims of a bogus Jamaican lottery, for example, may indicate that a bank in the Netherlands will process your winnings.

Your protection: Never respond to any claim that you've won a foreign lottery (and be aware of any domestic come-ons—especially from states where you don't live.) These scams are among the most prevalent nationwide, especially among older Americans. (Indeed, complaints about foreign lottery scams account for five times more mail to AARP's "Scam Alert" column than any other ruse.) Once you respond—whether by email, letter or phone—your contact information is placed on a "sucker list." This roster of rubes is then traded or sold to other scammers, flooding you with many more phony come-ons.

Copied from the book, "Scam Proof Your Life" by Sid Kirchheimer.