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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: PROPERTY TAX REASSESSMENT – WARNING: DO NOT PAY FOR A FREE SERVICE

Property owners in Stanislaus County again recently received a solicitation from a firm known as Property Tax Adjustment Services offering to file a reassessment application with the Stanislaus County Assessor for a fee of \$189.00.

Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager and Stanislaus County Assessor Doug Harms warned owners not to respond to the mailer because the service is provided by the Assessor's office without charge. "I am worried that property owners will feel they need to pay \$189.00 for a service that is free," explained Harms. "For the 2009-2010 assessment year we are reviewing most of the residential properties in Stanislaus County to make sure the owner is not paying more in property taxes than the property is worth," Harms added.

The mailer includes a brochure from the Stanislaus County Assessor's Office that while factual, may lead property owners to believe the solicitation is legitimate. Harms said, "While the brochure is from the Assessor's office they did not have permission to use it in their attempt to trick property owners."

The Assessor is required by law to review the properties as of January 1, 2009 to determine if the current market value is lower than the established assessed value. Property owners who receive assessment related mail should check the validity of the sender and contact the County Assessor's Office if you have questions or concerns related to your assessment.

Owners of properties with resulting reduced assessments will receive a value notice by the end of June notifying them of the results. Owners who disagree with the results may call the Assessor's office at (209) 525-6461 and/or file an application for reduced assessment with Clerk of the Board (209) 525-6414 between July 2nd and November 30th, 2009.

The Stanislaus County District Attorney's Real Estate Fraud Unit warns homeowners to be especially vigilant when receiving solicitations such as these and to contact them if they have concerns.

IF YOU FEEL YOU ARE A VICTIM OF REAL ESTATE FRAUD, PLEASE CALL THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AT 525-5550 AND REQUEST TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE IN THE REAL ESTATE FRAUD UNIT