April 25, 2006 – Clearwater, Florida
RESIDENTS CAUTIONED OF UNNECESSARY, PRICEY “CONVENIENCE”
Private company charges nearly $60 for $2.50 certified deed copy

Many Pinellas County residents have received an official-looking letter emphasizing the government’s recommendation to keep a certified copy of property deeds. The private company sending the letter hopes residents will see the value in paying $59.95 for a document they can obtain from the Clerk’s office for about $2.50, according to Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Officials of Florida Record Retrieval Inc., Barry J. Isaacson and Gary W. Freed have defended their prices and intentions to various media outlets, saying they offer people the convenience of avoiding the hassles of going to the Clerk’s office in person.

“Pinellas County residents already have that convenience provided by the Clerk’s office and don’t need to pay almost $60 for it,” said Burke. “They can send a written request with a check or money order and we will send them a certified copy of the deed if they don’t want to come into the office in person.”

The written request must have the deed’s Official Record (OR) book and page number. Residents can obtain this information online at http://www.pinellasclerk.org or from the Records department 727-464-4876, according to Burke.

“I want to make sure people know that from our website, they can print a free uncertified copy,” said Burke. “And from our Recording Services departments they can purchase a copy for $1 per page and have it certified for $1.50 more.”

The letter from Florida Record Retrieval Inc., of Plantation, does include a disclaimer, which states the company is not affiliated with the state and that many records are available for nominal fees from government agencies.

For more information, contact the Clerk’s Office at 727-464-3341, 315 Court St., Clearwater, Florida, or visit the website.

ABOUT THE CLERK’S OFFICE
The Clerk of the Circuit Court was established as a public trustee by the Florida Constitution in 1838. The Clerk of the Circuit Court serves as the Clerk of Courts, the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, Auditor, Recorder and Custodian of all County Funds.