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### Residents cautioned about unnecessary pricey convenience

Private company charges nearly \$90 for \$2.50 certified deed copy

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PINELLAS COUNTY - Some Pinellas County residents are reporting receipt of an official-looking letter emphasizing the government's recommendation to keep a certified copy of property deeds.

Only this time the private company sending the letter hopes residents will see the value in paying \$85.00 plus \$4.95 for shipping and handling for a document they can obtain from the Clerk's office for about \$2.50, according to Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court.

"In the past another was charging about sixty dollars for a certified copy of a deed," said Burke. "This is a different company with an even higher price: nearly ninety dollars. These businesses often contend that they offer the convenience of avoiding the hassles of going to the Clerk's office in person.

"We already provide that convenience and Pinellas County residents don't need to pay almost \$90 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 [www.pinellasclerk.org](http://www.pinellasclerk.org) or from the Records department 727-464-4876, according to Burke.

"From our Web site people can print a free uncertified copy," said Burke. "And from our Recording Services departments they can purchase one for \$1 per page and have it certified for \$1.50 more."

The letter from [Fastdeeds.com](http://Fastdeeds.com) does include a disclaimer, which states the company is not affiliated with any state agency and that many records are available for nominal fees from government agencies.

For more information, call 727-464-3341 or visit [www.pinellasclerk.org](http://www.pinellasclerk.org).

A copy of a letter received may be viewed at [www.pinellasclerk.org/aspInclude2/images/DeedLetter08.jpg](http://www.pinellasclerk.org/aspInclude2/images/DeedLetter08.jpg).

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