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JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SBC-JIC Jesusita Fire 087
DATE: May 14, 2009
TIME: 1500 (3:00 P.M.)

Consumer Fraud Press Release

The County of Santa Barbara reminds the public to be wary of potential post-fire fraud scams, identity theft, and property crimes. Use caution when allowing access to property and/or personal information.

If members of the public become aware of suspicious activity, they should contact the Sheriff's Department at (805) 681-4100 during business hours and at (805) 692-5744 after business hours.

The Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office will also be investigating criminal activity, such as contract solicitation by unlicensed contractors, within the burn areas. To contact the District Attorney's Office regarding contract fraud call (805) 568-2300.

Before fire victims hire a contractor or sign any documents for repairs, the District Attorney's Office offers the following advice:

- Don't rush into repairs
- Get at least three bids
- Be cautious about door-to-door offers and flyers left on your doorstep
- Ask friends and family for recommendations about contractors they have hired
- Never pay in cash
- Even for small jobs, get proof that the person you are dealing with has insurance and a contractor's license for the type of work being done
- Get a written contract that details every work plan

For more recovery information go to www.countyofsb.org

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