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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **DA'S REAL ESTATE FRAUD TASK FORCE INVESTIGATION LEADS TO SIX ARRESTS**

**RIVERSIDE** – In late 2015, at the direction of District Attorney Mike Hestrin, the Riverside County Real Estate Fraud Task Force was formed to investigate and prosecute crimes involving real estate fraud.

By April 2016, the Murrieta, Corona, and Cathedral City police departments had partnered with the DA's Office, with each of those three agencies assigning a detective to the task force. The task force also has one supervising district attorney's investigator, four senior DA's investigators, four DA's investigative technicians, and one real estate document examiner.

One example of the work done by the task force is the arrests on Dec. 1, 2016, of six people charged in a criminal case involving an elaborate scheme using fraudulent documents to reportedly defraud victims of money and a property in Palm Desert. The defendants are accused of using fraudulent escrow files, bank statements, pay stubs, W-2 forms, and forged signatures in the Riverside County case resulting in a loss estimated at \$219,000. Two of the six defendants are also charged in an Orange County case in which they are accused of forging a grant deed to a home and obtaining a fraudulent loan. The task force also investigated that case as the property was in Riverside County. That home ultimately went into foreclosure and was sold. The loss in that case is estimated at \$250,000.

Charged in the Riverside County case, RIF1605751, are Maria Rosas, DOB: 2-25-67, of Indio; Cesar Ramirez, DOB: 9-2-79, of Corona; Michael Angel Garcia, DOB: 5-31-83; of Riverside; Oliver Salazar, DOB: 9-20-87, of Moreno Valley; Susan Castellanos, DOB: 10-26-71, of Fountain Valley; and Denys Osoria, DOB: 10-11-85, of Santa Ana. All six are charged with various counts which include grand theft, mortgage fraud, and forgery. Salazar and Osoria are also charged in the Orange County case.

The Real Estate Fraud Task Force has personnel located in each of the DA's Office three regional offices – Riverside, Indio, and Murrieta. The task force receives, on average, between 12 and 20 new complaints each month.

The task force is funded by the Real Estate Fraud Prosecution Trust Fund which funds not only investigations and prosecutions, but also the training needed for task force members to stay up to date on real estate fraud as well as some of the equipment necessary for these investigations.

A real estate fraud hotline is available in both English and Spanish for those who believe they may be victims. That toll-free number is (877) 723-7779. The task force maintains that hotline and receives an average of about 50 calls per month.

Information about real estate fraud, as well as a Real Estate Fraud Complaint Form, can be found on a link on the DA's Office website at <http://rivcodan.org/opensms/daoffice/Units/SpecialProsecution/RealEstate>

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