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**NEWS RELEASE**

**LAKEVILLE WOMAN CHARGED IN THEFTS EXCEEDING \$220,000**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that Kuntée Singramdoo, age 49 of Lakeville, has been charged\* with five counts of Theft and three counts of Theft by Swindle (all felonies), in connection with the theft of over \$220,000 while she worked as an independent closer for a Burnsville title and real estate company.

Backstrom said that the Minnesota Department of Commerce received information in 2008 about a possible insurance fraud case involving Singramdoo. Singramdoo was licensed as a real estate closer, insurance producer and notary public and worked as an independent closer for a Burnsville title and real estate company from February 2004 through February 2008. As part of her duties, she performed real estate closings, including preparing and distributing checks from the firm's trust and title insurance accounts. The investigation found that Singramdoo engaged in a pattern of insurance/mortgage fraud resulting in total losses exceeding \$220,000.

The investigation revealed that Singramdoo used several methods to accomplish her thefts: (1) she would write checks for her personal bills or bills of other family members as part of a real estate closing and then enter those payments directly on mortgage forms as if the obligation was owed by the buyer or seller in the transaction; (2) she would accurately prepare documents for purposes of real estate closings and subsequently change the forms at a later date to reflect fraudulent payments; and (3) she would issue valid checks for payment as part of closings, but would never tender them to the payee and would subsequently reissue the checks to pay her own or her family member's creditors.

Singramdoo admitted to the Department of Commerce that she embezzled her client's funds by issuing checks for her own benefit and her licenses were suspended in March of this year. She claimed to have had overwhelming personal debts for which she used the embezzled funds.

Backstrom commented: "This is the fifth theft-related case exceeding \$150,000 that we have filed in Dakota County this year, compared to five such cases filed in all of 2008. This is a disturbing trend which we hope ceases."

Backstrom said that Singramdoo made her first appearance in court today. Judge Martha Simonett did not impose bail. Her next court appearance will be on July 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in Hastings.

Backstrom praised the Minnesota Department of Commerce for its thorough investigation into this matter.

For a copy of the criminal complaint, go to <http://services.co.dakota.mn.us/ComplaintSearch>. A mug shot may be viewed at <http://services.co.dakota.mn.us/InmateSearch> while in custody. If you have questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4440.

*\*Criminal charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant/suspect is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*