

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association Warns Public of Rising Real Estate Fraud in Lee County

Fort Myers, FL — The Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association (RPCRA) is issuing a consumer alert regarding a sharp increase in fraudulent land listing activity across Lee County. In just the past 48 hours, five fraudulent real estate transactions have been reported, including one case where a \$250,000 parcel was fraudulently listed and placed under contract.

“These scams are becoming more sophisticated, targeting vacant landowners and pushing unsuspecting buyers and agents into rushed transactions. As the Voice of Real Estate in Lee County, we take these threats seriously. Education and vigilance are our strongest defenses,” said Karen Borrelli, President of the Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association.

Common Red Flags of Property Fraud

- Properties listed well below market value to spark urgency.
- Sellers are pushing for unusually fast closings or immediate funds.
- Refusal to meet in person or provide proper documentation.
- Inconsistencies in ownership records or suspicious offshore seller addresses.
- Wire transfer requests to unfamiliar accounts.

What Consumers Can Do

RPCRA urges property owners and buyers to:

- **Understand property fraud:** This occurs when someone tries to sell land they don’t own using a fake deed. It doesn’t legally transfer ownership but can make it appear that it has. Clearing your title after this can be complicated.

- **Verify ownership** through the Lee County Clerk of Court's records.
- **Register for Alerts:** [Register for the Property Fraud Alert Service](#) to receive notifications if documents are filed under their name.
- **Work with licensed Realtors® and reputable title companies** who can help spot fraudulent activity.
- **Trust your instincts**—if a deal seems “too good to be true,” it may be a scam.

Best Practices for Realtors®

RPCRA recommends Realtors®:

- **Verify Identity & Ownership:** Cross-check seller credentials and county tax records.
- **Confirm Seller Location:** Ensure consistency between tax records and seller-provided information.
- **Insist on Personal Interaction:** For vacant properties, meet in person or via trusted representative.
- **Engage Title Companies:** Rely on established title company verification procedures.
- **Trust Your Instincts:** If the deal feels wrong, investigate before proceeding.

[Learn more](#) about Property Fraud through this conversation with Lee County's Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller, Kevin Karnes.

RPCRA has notified both the Lee County Sheriff's Department and the Clerk & Comptroller's Office and is working with local media to ensure public awareness.

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To learn more about Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association and membership, visit rpcra.org.

About the Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association

Founded in 1922 as the Fort Myers Board of Realty, the Royal Palm Coast Realtor® Association has grown to serve multiple counties across Southwest Florida, achieving Mega Board status. The Association is a leading advocate and resource for its members, advancing their professional success through education, communication, and strategic leadership on key industry issues.