

Register warns about Homestead-form scam

By Tom Dalton
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March 05, 2009 05:25 am

— SALEM — Victoria Lord of Beverly was advised by her accountant to file a Homestead form at the Registry of Deeds to gain some added legal protection for her home.

She went to a Web site and downloaded one of the forms for \$15. When she took it over to the Registry of Deeds in Shetland Park, she was told that they would have given it to her for free.

Lord is one of dozens of North Shore residents who have been "scammed," according to Register John O'Brien.

"In today's economy, charging \$15 for one sheet of paper is just outrageous," Assistant Register Kevin Harvey said.

Lord said she doesn't plan to ask for her money back but hopes her story makes others aware of a free service provided by the Registry of Deeds.

Under an estate of homestead, homeowners can get up to \$500,000 in protection on their principal residence.

For more information, call the Registry's customer service department at 978-542-1704 or go to www.salemdeeds.com.

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