Dear Owners:
This topic was brought up at today's UCO Delegate Meeting for Century Village – Attached is a handout with instructions to register your property on Palm Beach County's Fraud Alert portal which is: **www.mypalmbeachclerk.com/PFA**. I encourage everyone to register for their own protection.
Any questions, please email me, NOT ALL. I do not know more than what is spelled out here but we have just registered based on the instructions.

From my research – this is what additional information I have found:
Palm Beach County is experiencing a **major surge in property deed-related fraud**, and local officials are openly calling it an *epidemic*. The trend is sharp, recent, and well-documented across multiple credible sources.

What's happening in Palm Beach County

- **Deed theft cases have exploded from 4 cases in 2023 to 184 cases in 2025**, a **4,500% increase** according to the State Attorney's Office.
- County Clerk Mike Caruso has publicly warned that the county could see **up to 800 cases in 2026** if the trend continues.
- Fraudsters are increasingly using **AI tools to identify vulnerable homeowners**, especially seniors over 65.
- The Palm Beach Post reports that criminals are filing **fake deeds to steal homes**, with cases rising from four to roughly 180 in just two years.
- Victims often discover the fraud only when they try to sell, refinance, or pay taxes on a property that has been illegally transferred.

How the fraud typically works

- **Forged signatures** on deeds or powers of attorney.
- **Fake IDs** used to impersonate owners.

- **Illegitimate deed filings** recorded with the county before anyone notices.
- **Targeting of seniors**, absentee owners, or properties that appear unoccupied or paid off.

One documented case involved a man forging a family member's name and using a fake driver's license to obtain title to Boca Raton land.

Why Palm Beach County is seeing this spike

Several factors are converging:

- High property values make the area attractive to fraudsters.
- Many owners are seasonal or elderly, making properties appear "low-touch."
- Public records are easily accessible, giving criminals the data they need.
- AI tools make it easier to identify targets and create convincing forged documents.

What local officials are doing

- The Clerk's office is actively warning residents and encouraging enrollment in **Property Fraud Alerts**.
- Law enforcement and prosecutors have increased investigations and prosecutions.
- Public awareness campaigns are underway to help owners spot suspicious activity.

What you can do as a property owner in Palm Beach County

Given you are a property owner, these steps are especially relevant:

- **Enroll in the Palm Beach County Property Fraud Alert system** (free).
- **Check your property records periodically** for unauthorized filings (https://pbcpao.gov/index.htm)
- **Ensure mailing addresses are up to date** with the county so any notices reach you.
- **Be alert to unusual inquiries** about units or ownership status.

Thank you,
Peter Kandell, President, Chatham Q Association