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Arapahoe County conducts investigation into workplace prank *This matter has been referred to the Sheriff for further investigation*

LITTLETON --- Arapahoe County is investigating an apparent workplace prank at the County's Weatherization Office involving the suspension of a desiccated squirrel in a storage shed.

It has been reported that in late September, employees in the County's Weatherization Division discovered a long-dead squirrel suspended from a rope in a storage shed used by employees of the division. The incident was not reported to supervisors until approximately four weeks after it happened. Once the incident was reported, Human Resources immediately began an investigation.

As part of the investigation, all Weatherization employees were interviewed, staff meetings were held and employees were required to attend mandatory workplace behavior training.

"We want to be very clear. Arapahoe County has no tolerance for workplace pranks or inappropriate activities," said Don Klemme, Director of Community Resources, which includes the Weatherization Division.

Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts, the County has been unable to identify the person or persons responsible. The County's investigation has revealed that it would have been almost impossible for the person responsible to know who would next need supplies from the shed and therefore would have opened the shed to find the squirrel. Consequently, the motive for the incident has not been established, nor has it been determined if any particular employee was targeted. As part of their duties, employees often find dead rodents, including squirrels, in the attics of the homes they are weatherizing and remove them for disposal.

In a separate incident, a Weatherization employee reported finding exposed razor blades in his work belt about one week prior to when the squirrel incident was reported. The investigation was unable to identify the person responsible or whether the two incidents are linked.

Since the investigations into both incidents have stalled, the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners has requested the Arapahoe County Sheriff to investigate the matter.

The Weatherization Division helps make homes more energy efficient and habitable for qualified low-income Arapahoe County and Adams County residents. The Division's 28 employees weatherize approximately 700 homes each year.

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