



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **DA CONDUCTS ANNUAL HOLIDAY BAD CHECK ARREST SWEEP**

During an afternoon press conference District Attorney Mike Ramsey announced the arrest of several bad check writers in the annual District Attorney's Bad Check Unit Holiday Warrant Sweep. The sweep is designed as a warning to bad check writers that such criminal activity is not tolerated in Butte County. With the approach of the holiday season and the slumping economy, Ramsey said the warrant sweeps alerts those who may be tempted not to purchase holiday gifts if they don't have the money to pay for those gifts.

Ramsey also hoped to alert merchants to the greater danger of this type of fraudulent activity occurring during this time of year. Even with the advent of new technologies reducing the number of people who pay for their items with checks, merchants still take a huge hit during the holidays from people purchasing gifts with bad checks. The District Attorney Bad Check Unit always has an influx of checks written on non-sufficient funds or closed accounts after the holiday season, and this year, with the fluctuating economy, the potential for such behavior increases.

The Butte County District Attorney's Bad Check Unit was formed in 1993 under a new state law at the time and has resulted in the return of \$3,473,878.05 in restitution to Butte County merchants. The program was instituted as a pre-prosecution diversion program, intended to recover restitution and allow the check writer to avoid prosecution. The check writer must pay restitution to the merchant for the total amount of the check written and any bank fee incurred by the merchant as a result of the check having been returned.

In Butte County, the check writer is initially offered a chance to pay for the check and bank fee, along with a one time administration fee of \$35.00, within 10 days. If the check writer does not pay for the check within this time period, he/she is then required to pay a \$35.00 per check fee and attend a \$75.00 financial management class. If the check writer fails to avail him or herself of these two options, they may be arrested, prosecuted and face jail time.

Merchants who have been the victim of checks written on closed accounts or those accounts with non-sufficient funds, should contact the District Attorney's Bad Check Unit at 538-7089 for more information.

Attached is the list of wanted persons Ramsey announced at today's press conference:

Name	Age	City	Checks Amount
Mary Barton	45	Chico	\$490.25
Lee Bostick	22	Chico	\$574.40
Joseph Grayson	33	Chico	\$2575.81
Deja Hodges	28	Chico	\$521.83
Steve Inman	40	Chico	\$2455.57
Scott Meilstrup	27	Chico	\$249.37
Tamie Cox	48	Oroville	\$965.90
Sabrina Johnson	25	Oroville	\$479.65
Lynnette Decesare	42	Paradise	\$1046.99
Zachary Grado	22	Paradise	\$2027.22
Yvette Smith	33	Paradise	\$1102.87
Kurt Bravo	51	Magalia	\$578.34
Deborah Grubbs	20	Magalia	\$850.93
Emily Esquivel*	46	Biggs	\$459.21
Rachelle Vincent	25	Gridley	\$568.58
Latasha Haynie	38	Chico	\$5073.13
Denise Hernandez	34	Willows	\$263.59
Judith Cardenas	25	Hamilton City	\$306.25

If you have any information on any of these wanted bad check writers please contact the DA Fraud Hotline at 1-866-323-7283 or on-line at <http://buttecounty.net/DA>.