



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 sweep alerts those who may be tempted not to write bad checks to Butte County merchants.

Ramsey also warned merchants of the greater danger of this type of fraudulent activity 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 writing bad checks. The District Attorney's 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 \$3,699,337.29 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 \$50 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 \$50 per check fee and attend a \$75 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.

For those who have failed to participate in the restitution opportunity presented to them, 35 Felony and 20 Misdemeanor complaints have been issued over the past year. In the last year, there have been 41 convictions of which 5 people have been sent to state prison.

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. More information can be also be obtained at the Butte County District Attorney's Web Site at <http://www.buttecounty.net/da/checks.htm> .

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

Name	Age	City	Checks Amount
*Muteb Almalki	26	Chico	\$347.61
Nicholas Colgan	22	Chico	\$322.97
* Steve Gomes	41	Chico	\$216.97
Christy Gorley	36	Paradise	\$1070.76
*Deborah Grubbs	21	Portola	\$850.93
*Lisbeth Hidalgo	25	Live Oak	\$509.73
* David Homan	27	Citrus Heights	\$772.10
Kody Hunderman	20	Oroville	\$2711.62
*Susie Lucas	45	Chico	\$209.40 w/Prior
Tracy Malson	37	Oroville	\$148.25
*Jessica Miller	27	Chico	\$1291.43
Scott Meilstrup	28	Chico	\$249.37
*Stacie Murphy	38	Paradise	\$438.36
Sarah Nattress	21	Paradise	\$940.00
Angelica Santistevan	24	Orland	\$1028.60
*Amanda Tadeo	21	Red Bluff	\$227.72
*Maria Vargas	28	Chico	\$109.17
*Alicia Winchester	35	Corning	\$3456.00

* Arrested/ cited by 2 p.m. of 11/18/09.

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>.