



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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VENTURA, California –District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that Joanne Abruzzese (DOB 3/14/1958), of Simi Valley, was arrested on February 15, 2017. Abruzzese is charged with four felony counts including grand theft and forgery.

Abruzzese was employed by the Simi Valley Community Foundation from 2012 until April 2016, and was its executive director during the latter two years of her employment. The Simi Valley Community Foundation provides charitable support for the humanitarian needs of the local community and serves as an umbrella for local charities to coordinate and maximize resources. Over the course of almost two years, while executive director of the foundation, Abruzzese stole approximately \$55,000 by writing checks from the foundation bank account to her home mortgage company. Although a second signature was required for checks, Abruzzese forged the second signature to accomplish the fraud.

Bail was set at \$10,000. The maximum local prison term to which Abruzzese can be sentenced is five years.