




GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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Oxnard Bookkeeper Arrested for Embezzlement – Bail Set at \$1.5 Million

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today the filing of charges against Inez Marie Byars (DOB 5/15/1975), of Oxnard, on nine felony fraud counts. A complaint was filed on April 12, 2019, charging Byars with grand theft, forgery, elder/dependent fraud, identity theft and the aggravated white-collar crime enhancement of taking more than \$500,000. The charges against Byars are the result of an investigation conducted by the Oxnard Police Department.

Byars was the longtime bookkeeper for an elderly and disabled Oxnard resident who owns a real estate company called Discountland, Inc. The law enforcement investigation in this case revealed that, over many years, Byars secretly embezzled the victim's money by misappropriating corporate and personal funds for her own benefit. She accomplished her thefts by routinely forging checks and by misusing a company ATM/debit card. Byars also used the victim's identity to open and use credit accounts for her personal benefit without authorization. Byars was able to conceal her theft for years by failing to make property tax payments on numerous parcels the victim's company managed.

Byars was arrested on April 10, 2019. She remains in custody in the Ventura County jail with bail set at \$1.5 million. She appeared in court on April 12, 2019, and pled not guilty to all charges. An early disposition conference is scheduled for April 19, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. in courtroom 12 of the Ventura Superior Court, County of Ventura. If convicted on all charges, Byars faces up to 14 years in prison.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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