



GREGORY D. TOTTE
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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Oxnard Resident Pleads Guilty to Embezzling Over \$700,000 from Elderly Victim

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that on July 31, 2019, Oxnard resident Inez Marie Byars (DOB 5/15/1975) pled guilty to seven felony charges of grand theft, forgery, elder/dependent fraud and identity theft. Byars also admitted the aggravated white-collar crime enhancement. The charges against Byars resulted from 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 investigation in this case revealed that over many years, Byars secretly embezzled money by misappropriating her employer's corporate and personal funds for her own benefit. She accomplished her thefts by routinely forging checks and misusing a company ATM/debit card. Byars also used her employer's identity to open and use credit accounts for her personal benefit without her employer's authorization. Byars concealed her theft for years by failing to make property tax payments on numerous parcels her employer's company managed. To date, the cumulative amount Byars embezzled in this case totals approximately \$742,000.

Byars remains in custody pending her sentencing hearing, which will occur on September 3, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 12 of the Ventura County Superior Court. Byars is expected to receive a sentence of nine 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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