

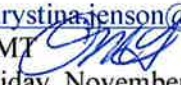


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NEWS RELEASE

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Approved: CMT 
Date: Friday, November 22, 2019
Release No.: 19-134

Auto Insurance Fraud Unit Targets Cross-Border Fraud Scheme

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that Graciela Medina-Montes (DOB 9/6/1952), of Santa Paula, pled guilty to two counts of felony auto insurance fraud. The prosecution of Medina-Montes resulted from a joint investigation by the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Auto Insurance Fraud Unit and California Department of Insurance (CDI).

In August 2018, Medina-Montes drove her 2001 Chevrolet Tahoe from Santa Paula into Mexico, crossing the border at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. After crossing the border, Medina-Montes left the vehicle in Mexico and returned to Ventura County. Shortly thereafter, Medina-Montes falsely reported to the Santa Paula Police Department and her auto insurance company, National General Insurance, that the vehicle was stolen while parked in Santa Paula. CDI detectives confronted Medina-Montes with evidence proving the Tahoe had recently been driven into Mexico. Medina-Montes then admitted she in fact drove the vehicle into Mexico and that it had not been stolen in Santa Paula as she previously reported to police.

At the time of her plea, Medina-Montes paid \$500 in restitution to National General Insurance. Her sentencing hearing is scheduled for January 22, 2020, in the Ventura Superior Court, County of Ventura. Medina-Montes faces up to six years in jail and a fine up to \$50,000.

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