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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 28, 2010 **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy District Attorney
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MADISON MAN CONVICTED OF STEALING IDENTITY OF HIS OWN SON

(Woodland, CA) – October 28, 2010 – Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that on October 27, 2010, a jury convicted Thomas Wesley Bertram of one felony count of Use of Personal Identifying Information of Another. Bertram is 55 and resides in Madison. The victim in this case was his son.

In January, 2009 a local farming operation hired Bertram as a commercial truck driver. When filling out the employment paperwork, Bertram substituted his son's Social Security Number for his own to avoid tax liability. He also wanted to avoid losing Social Security benefits he received under his own Social Security Number.

Later that year, his son attempted to apply for unemployment benefits but, much to his surprise, was advised that he had been "working" between January and April 2009. The son went to the local farming operation and discovered that his father who had stolen his identity. The victim reported the crime to the Yolo County Sheriff's Department.

When Bertram was finally arrested on June 20, 2010 he claimed that he never worked for the farming operation. When confronted by his son, Bertram claimed he hadn't used the number, hadn't ever even heard of the farming operation, and suggested that his ex-brother-in-law or an "illegal immigrant" was to blame. Yolo County Sheriff detectives were able to expose Bertram's lies by interviewing the farm owner who explained that he had known Bertram since high school in the late 60's and confirmed that Bertram had worked for the farm in early 2009.

This was not the first time Bertram stole his son's identity. In 2004, Bertram was arrested for attempting to open a credit card at the Home Depot in Woodland under his son's Social Security Number. Bertram admitted to using the number, but claimed it was because he had had both his Social Security Number and his son's and did not know which one was his. The son testified at trial that he had never given his father permission to use his Social Security Number.

Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated, "There is no justification for economically victimizing anyone, much less your own child." Reisig continued, "Identity theft is a danger that we all have to protect against, but this man violated a fundamental duty as a parent and the jury held him accountable."

Sentencing is scheduled for December 15, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. in Department 6 in front of the Honorable Paul Richardson. Bertram faces up to 3 years in state prison.

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