

# YOLO COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY FRAUD FORUM



301 2nd Street., Woodland, CA 95695  
<http://www.yolocounty.org/index.aspx?page=510>

530-666-8180

## Fraud Forum

By Investigator Chris Forsyth

This purpose of the Fraud Forum newsletter is to educate the public and highlight the various types of fraud that may be occurring in our county.

The public is also educated each year at our annual Fraud Awareness Fair. This year the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Fraud Awareness Fair was moved from July to October and again took place in West Sacramento on October 10<sup>th</sup>. This year's event was deemed a great success and was bigger and better than our previous years. This success was in large part due to the spirit of cooperation exhibited by all of the participating agencies.

Forty agencies representing Federal, State, Local government and private companies attended the event held during the Crime Prevention month of October. With the continued struggles of a depressed economy and the rapid increases in our elder population, fraud and scams are on the rise.

The Yolo County District Attorney's Office is committed to being at the forefront of this battle and assisting the public, by continuing to seek ways to combat fraud and help our citizens keep their hard earned savings in their pockets.

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## Workers' Compensation Insurance Fraud

By Lt. Dan Stroski

During previous issues of the Fraud Forum, I have written much about applicant fraud and unlicensed contractors. In this issue I wish to discuss uninsured employers and the problems that can arise when an employer fails to carry the needed workers' compensation insurance for his/her employees.

On May 3, 2011 a 31-year-old West Sacramento businessman pled no contest to forcing his employee of the company to file a false healthcare claim, tax evasion, and the failure to file a return with the Employment Development Department. These misdemeanor pleas came as a result of an investigation conducted by the Insurance Fraud Unit of the Yolo County District Attorney's office.

Our investigation revealed that an exotic car storage facility in West Sacramento was operating





2012 Fraud Awareness Fair,  
West Sacramento Civic Center Galleria

### *Workers' Comp.* from page 1

without workers' compensation insurance. On April 8, 2010, an employee of the company broke a thumb while operating a power buffer. When the employee reported the injury to the business owner, the owner told the employee that if he (the employee) filed a workers' compensation insurance claim, the employer would no longer be able to afford to keep the injured worker on payroll.

The employer then encouraged the employee to allow his health care provider to handle the injury and that he (the employer) would reimburse the employee for any expenses incurred. The practice of transferring the liability of an industrial injury on to a healthcare provider is illegal and carries with it criminal law sanctions.

The California workers Compensations Code is the sole and only remedy for prosecutors regarding industrial injuries. In this case, the employer requiring his employee to lie about how

and where his injury occurred, caused a false healthcare claim to be filed. The employer was sentenced to three years probation, fined \$10,000, ordered to pay \$808 in miscellaneous court fees, and ordered to pay restitution to Kaiser Permanente in the amount of \$725.00



## Crime Trends

By Enforcement Officer Dave Edwards

One of the most frequently occurring crimes is cell phone theft.

The Los Angeles Times recently reported that nearly half of all thefts in San Francisco this year were cell phone-related, with most occurring on transit lines.

Some simple precautions you can use to protect your cell phone are:

- Be aware of your surroundings when using your cell phone.
- Never leave your cell phone unattended.
- Use the password protection when turning on your phone .
- For Smart Phone users, consider purchasing a program that disables your phone in case it is lost or stolen.
- Turn your cell phone off when you are not using it.
- Be aware of sensitive information on your phone, like passwords and personal identification information.
- Turn off your Bluetooth if your not using it.
- Be very cautious about opening attachments as cell phones are just as suscepti-

See *Cell Phones* page 5

# Automobile Insurance Fraud

By Investigator Ray Antar

The Yolo County District Attorney's Office continues to help in the fight against fraud and automobile theft. With a dedicated investigator assigned to handle those cases, many people have learned the hard way that committing automobile insurance fraud and/ or stealing vehicles in Yolo County is costly. The California Department of Insurance, CA. Highway Patrol, insurance carriers and the National Insurance Crime Bureau all work with the District Attorney's Office in fighting these crimes.

In 2012, the Yolo County District Attorney's Office investigated and/ or prosecuted 18 individuals suspected of committing auto insurance fraud and 97 suspected of being in possession of a stolen vehicle. These numbers indicate that these crimes are prevalent in Yolo County!



*Most Vehicle Thefts are crimes of opportunity*

**Most Vehicle Thefts** are crimes of opportunity so the harder you make it for a thief to target your car the less likely you are to become a victim. By following these easy tips it is less likely that your vehicle will be stolen:

- Lock your doors and remove your keys from the ignition.
- Close your windows completely.
- Park in well lit areas.
- Invest in an audible alarm system.
- Use locking lug nuts on high end wheels.
- Invest in starter, ignition and/ or fuel disablers.

While 62% of stolen vehicles are found (many times with significant damage to them), unrecovered vehicles often wind up in the hands of organized criminals. From there, the vehicles might be shipped overseas and sold on the black market or stripped at a chop shop. The parts of stripped cars are often sold to crooked body shop operators who then sell the parts or install them on other vehicles. These vehicle parts may also be resold to an unsuspecting consumer. Vehicle theft is driven by money and greed. It's a dangerous business that victimizes everyone.



Yolo District Attorney's Fraud Awareness Fair Team 2012

# Welfare Fraud

By SIU Investigator Ginny Stroski

The Yolo County District Attorney and the Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) are partners in the fight against Public Assistance Fraud. This collaboration allows the DA to help protect the money administered by DESS and assist those who truly need the assistance and hold those accountable who try to steal from the public coffers.

We rely on the public who witness fraud to call into the Public Assistance Hotline and report the crime. Below you will find the Hotline Phone Number for Yolo County and a few examples of Welfare Fraud. If you are aware of any abuses of these valuable programs please call:

**PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD**

**HOTLINE**

530.661.2654

“Public Assistance fraud hurts everyone.”

Did you know?

## EXAMPLES OF WELFARE FRAUD

### **Unreported Income:**

Individuals may fail to disclose income, earned or unearned, that may affect eligibility for aid. (“What? Cash for babysitting, I didn’t know that is considered income...”)

### **Ineligible Dependents Receiving Aid:**

Individuals may attempt to receive benefits for children who are not eligible to receive benefits or who are already receiving benefits on another welfare case.

(“But, my child only lives with my ex for 80% of the time...why can’t I claim him too?”)

### **Absent Parent Actually Living in the Home:**

Individuals may claim that a parent who is living in the home is not living there for the purpose of receiving aid. (“Why? The other parent only lives here part time but leave their belongings at my house because the parent doesn’t live anywhere else...”)

### **Claimed Dependents Not Living in the Home:**

Individuals may claim guardianship for children, and/or claim that these children are residing in the same home as the beneficiary when these children live with other adults or guardians; or are residing elsewhere. (“Who? They are my children but are visiting their grandparents and have been for the past six (6) months...”)

### **Duplicate Aid:**

Individuals may be receiving aid from other states or counties while receiving benefits from Yolo County DESS. (“Where? I live in Nevada and Yolo County. Why can’t I received assistance from both?”)





## Life Insurance & Annuities

### Fraud

By Investigator Chris Forsyth

#### Protections For Seniors During Sales

##### Presentations

During these hard economic times unscrupulous scammers are targeting the elderly more than ever. One popular scam involves sales presentations to seniors. Did you know that there are laws in place to protect seniors from these types of insurance & investment scams?

In the area of Life Insurance and Annuity Sales, the following laws apply:

##### Written Notice

- Before an agent or a broker can come to your home and meet with you, that agent must provide you with a written notice 24 hours prior to the visit. This notice must state that you will be given a sales presentation on an annuity and you have the right to have other persons present like family, friends, or a financial advisor. It must also state that you have the right to end the meeting at any time and the right to contact the Department of Insurance for information, and/or to file a complaint.
- This notice must include the Consumer Hotline toll-free telephone number 1(800) 927-HELP (4357).  
Lastly, the notice must list the individuals who will be coming to your

home and his/ or her insurance license number.

##### Home Visit

When agents or brokers contact you in your home, before asking you any questions, they should tell you that they are there to talk about insurance and state their names, titles and the insurance company they represent.

- All persons visiting should provide a business card or other written identification stating their name, business address, telephone number, and any insurance license number
- If you ask them to leave, they should leave immediately
- No person may solicit a sale, or an order for the sale of an annuity, at the residence of a senior, (in person or by telephone), using any plan, scheme, or ruse that misrepresents the true status or mission of the contact.

If you suspect that you have been a victim of deceptive sales practices, or you have a specific question, you may contact the Yolo County District Attorney's Office at 530-666-8180, or the Department of Insurance at 800-927-4357 website: <http://www.insurance.ca.gov>



*Cell Phones* continued from page 2

ble to viruses as your computer.

- Maintain updated software.



Lt. Dan Stroski - Yolo District Attorney's Office  
**HAPPY RETIREMENT DAN !**

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"Seek justice. Do Justice"

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