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PRESS RELEASE

SHASTA LAKE CITY WOMAN SENTENCED FOR IDENTITY THEFT

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This morning a Shasta Lake City woman was sentenced to six years and eight months in State Prison following her convictions for ten felonies - five counts of Identity Theft and five counts of Petty Theft with a Prior Conviction. Judge William Gallagher sentenced Lorie Deann Jones, 37, after a jury found her guilty of using five Shasta County residents' personal identifying information to process fraudulent returns at the Hallmark Store where she worked. Jones also has four prior felony convictions, all for theft.

Jones was released from State Prison on her last theft conviction in October of 2005. In January of 2006, Jones was hired as an assistant manager in the Hallmark Store at the Mount Shasta Mall, after lying about her criminal history, saying she'd never been convicted of any crimes. In the month of February 2006, she forged the names and signatures of five different women on return slips, in order to take cash from the business. The manager of the store was alerted by her superiors that there had been a spike in the number of return transactions, and asked her to look into it. She quickly discovered that none of the victims had been to the Hallmark Store, and none had returned any items. A police investigation ensued. It is unknown where Jones obtained the personal information of the various victims.

This case is an excellent example of why businesses need to conduct background checks on individuals who may be in a position to handle cash. Had the business checked Ms. Jones' criminal history with the Shasta County Courts, they would have found the prior convictions and determined she was on parole for grand theft. Jones was convicted in 1997 for using an ex-boyfriend's credit card without his consent, then again in 2002, for twice using a credit card belonging to the Shasta Economic Development Corporation. In 2004, she was convicted of grand theft for pushing a cart full of groceries out of a Raley's grocery store.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Erin M. Dervin, and investigated by the Redding Police Department Investigator James Cumming.