MONO COUNTY SHERIFF 911

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MONO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Ralph Obenberger
Undersheriff

To: **All News Outlets**

From: **Ralph Obenberger, Undersheriff**

Date: **December 23, 2009**

RE: **Traffic Stop Leads To Gift Cards & Narcotic Chemicals Being Seized**

Corrected Press Information:

Initial Press Release Stated The Traffic Stop Occurred On December 12th……
It Actually Occurred On December 22, 2009 (as Stated Below)

On Tuesday, December 22, 2009 at approximately 4:53 PM a Mono County Deputy conducted a routine traffic stop on a vehicle in the area of Highway 395 just south of Hot Creek Road for expired registration. The Deputy contacted the driver, identified on scene as Miss Marianne Uribe age 49 a resident of Richmond Michigan and the passenger Mr. Earl Steven Williams age 55 a resident of Tempe Arizona, and explained the reason for the traffic stop.

Mono County Dispatch confirmed three outstanding warrants for Miss Uribe for charges such as narcotics and traffic violations; they were unable to confirm any positive identification for Mr. Williams under the name and date of birth that he had given to the deputy.

During the investigation, deputies found over 350 'gift cards' with a face value in excess of $31,000.00 which were located in the vehicle and in the personal possession of Mr. Williams. These gift cards were from various retailers, but a majority of them were from 'Walmart' stores. They also found in the vehicle numerous chemicals that are associated with the manufacturing of methamphetamine.

Long Valley Fire Chief Fred Stump responded to the Sheriff Sub-station and checked the chemicals and containers for any leaks or potential hazardous material situations. He found the containers intact and suggested the chemicals be stored separately for safety purposes.

Both suspects were arrested and transported to the Bridgeport Sheriff Station for booking. They will face charges ranging from possession of chemicals to manufacture

methamphetamine, possession of narcotics, false identification to a peace officer, various traffic violations, and possibly stolen property; Investigators are still trying to determine if they can confirm that the 'gift cards' are stolen or legitimately obtained.

During the booking process it was determined via fingerprints that Mr. Williams, was actually Mr. Howard Dale Williams and is a Parole At Large and has an outstanding warrant out of the Sacramento area. During the booking process it was discovered that Miss Uribe had also hidden a plastic baggie of what appeared to be methamphetamine in her bra.

GIFT CARD FRAUD WARNING:

The Mono County Sheriff's Department wants to inform the citizens and visitors of Mono County that gift card fraud is happening all over the country. The fraud itself occurs when a suspect illegally obtains the security code for a gift card and places the card back onto the sales rack/display at the establishment – the suspect does not purchase the card, but the card is later purchased by an unsuspecting customer. The suspect is able to monitor the card via the internet to determine when the card has been activated, at which time the suspect then having the security code for the card makes fraudulent purchases before the legitimate patron spends or uses his/her gift card. Individuals can view previous news stories regarding gift card fraud that are available at the links below and/or they can do an internet search for further information.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETLpVTKBFMg&NR=1

OR

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvUinYHHreY

The law requires that arrest information be made available to the public. This publication may contain suspect information about individuals booked by the Mono County Sheriff's Department recently. Names of juveniles (under 18-years-old) are not public. Suspect information and ongoing investigation details are also withheld. Since most cases have yet to be adjudicated, all charges should be considered allegations. For questions/concerns regarding any information contained in this publication, contact Undersheriff Ralph Obenberger at (760) 932-7549.