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DA's First Hot Check Warrant Roundup Follows Record Restitution

Houston, Tx – The first-ever District Attorney's hot-check warrant roundup resulted in 28 arrests and bonds by Friday morning, after an unprecedented amnesty period collected a record amount of nearly \$130,000 in fees and restitution, District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced.

Lykos credited the success of the roundup to the coordination and assistance with law enforcement agencies in Thursday and Friday sweeps at residential and business locations throughout the county. District Attorney's Investigators combined for the arrests with Sheriff Adrian Garcia's Office and all eight of the Harris County Constables' Offices.

Many hot check writers had avoided arrest by making good on their hot checks, under the terms of the first District Attorney's Amnesty Offer announced earlier this month.

From the July 6 start to the end of the amnesty program extension on July 24, more than 400 people paid the Division \$129,745 in fees and restitution to be distributed to the hot-check victims. John Boone, Chief of the District Attorney's Check Fraud Division, said the final week resulted in record collections of more than \$60,000 – about double what is received during a typical week.

He warned that check fraud is an offense of theft, a serious crime that can carry long-term financial and personal consequences for offenders.

Boone said the program achieved its goals, both for victims and the criminal justice system. "The amnesty payments enable us to expedite the return of the money to victims, which is especially important during this time of economic uncertainty," Boone said. "Bad-check writers who did not pay up are now under arrest and in jail. The sweeps show that we mean business -- this type of crime will not be tolerated in Harris County."

The DA's Check Fraud Division plans more arrest roundups in the future, Boone said.
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