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Eastern District of California

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**MERCED COUNTY WOMAN CONVICTED OF BANK FRAUD, AGGRAVATED ID
THEFT, AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER MISUSE**

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that IDALINA MARIA TOSTE, 39, of Gustine, Calif., pleaded guilty this morning before United States District Court Judge Morrison C. England to felony bank fraud and identity theft charges.

This case is the product of an extensive combined investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Social Security Administration, the Merced County Sheriff's Department, and the City of Gustine Police Department.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, from July 2007 through November 2007, TOSTE executed an elaborate check-kiting scheme to steal money from banks and credit unions located in Stanislaus County, Merced County, and San Joaquin County. As part of the scheme, TOSTE unlawfully used stolen Social Security Numbers of numerous victims to open fraudulent bank and credit union accounts. She then deposited forged and fictitious checks, payable to herself and her alternate identities, in order to later successfully steal and attempt to steal federally insured bank and credit union money. TOSTE's intended loss to the financial institutions was approximately \$35,000.

TOSTE is scheduled to be sentenced on July 24, 2008. TOSTE is facing up to 30 years imprisonment for her bank fraud conviction, up to five additional years for her social security

number fraud conviction, and she will receive a mandatory two year sentence for her aggravated ID theft conviction. She also faces a fine of up to \$1,000,000, restitution, and federal supervised release of up to five years following any period of incarceration. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

TOSTE was on California state parole during commission of her felony fraud offenses. She has been denied bail and remanded into federal custody.

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