



News Release

Timothy Jeffries, Director

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DES Office of Inspector General Investigation Leads to Food Stamp Fraud Conviction in Show Low

PHOENIX – Director Timothy Jeffries announced today the recent felony conviction of Show Low resident Jason Banta for fraudulent schemes and unlawful use of food stamps. Mr. Banta’s arrest was the result of a joint investigation between the DES Office of the Inspector General, Public Assistance Benefits Fraud Unit and the Navajo County Sheriff’s Office, Major Crimes Apprehension Team.

“Theft of food stamp benefits is a crime,” said Director Tim Jeffries. “As stewards of taxpayer funds, we will not allow people who steal from the needy to simply walk away. On behalf of DES and the State of Arizona, I’d like to thank the Navajo County Sheriff’s Office for the collaboration on this case. This investigation demonstrates results that can be achieved when DES and criminal and prosecutorial agencies work together to achieve a common goal.”

On December 2, 2015, Mr. Banta pleaded guilty to a class 5 felony of fraudulent schemes and a class 6 felony of unlawful use of food stamps in Navajo County Superior Court. Mr. Banta served four months in jail prior to the sentencing. As a result of the conviction, he will now serve three years intensive probation and pay restitution and court costs. He is also unable to reapply for or obtain food stamps in the future.

“The Office of Inspector General (OIG) works vigorously to maintain the integrity of DES programs and services,” said Inspector General Juan J. Arcellana. “A critical component of this mission is the joint effort between OIG Investigative staff and other law enforcement agencies. This sentencing exemplifies the hard work of all those involved in working to detect and investigate fraud, waste and abuse.”

To report abuse of food stamps or other DES public benefits, call the Department’s toll free hotline number at 1-800-251-2436, or locally at 602-542-9449.

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