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Media Release

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Public Assistance Fraud Arrest

On Tuesday, September 1st, 2009 the City of Avon Park Police Department's Criminal Investigations Division conducted an investigation related to public assistance fraud. The Criminal Investigations Division actively monitors various internet classified ad boards for suspicious or illegal activity. During the monitoring, a classified ad was discovered posted on the Strato.Net wanted section.

A person who identified herself in the ad as Quinn Rogers of Avon Park was offering to allow someone to use her State of Florida Public Assistance EBT card in exchange for U.S. Currency. Detectives, in an undercover capacity, contacted the ad poster and discussed the details of what was being offered. During the online conversation with the poster, it was learned that the poster would use her card at any grocery store for groceries in exchange for half of the total purchase in U.S. Currency. Detectives operating in an undercover capacity exchanged telephone numbers with the poster and spoke on the telephone on Monday, August 31st, 2009. It was learned by the phone conversation with the poster that she was a female. She stated that she needed the money to pay court costs during a scheduled court appearance on Thursday, September 3rd, 2009. Arrangements were made with the poster to meet at Wal-Mart in Avon Park on Tuesday, September 1st, 2009 to conduct the transaction.

On Tuesday, September 1st, 2009 Detective Harbaugh, in an undercover capacity, entered the Wal-Mart and selected \$228.35 worth of EBT eligible merchandise. Detective Harbaugh contacted the poster and the poster met with her at a register. The items were run through the register and the poster paid the \$228.35 using her EBT card. Once the transaction was completed, the poster asked Detective Harbaugh for half of the \$228.35 in U.S. Currency. Detective Harbaugh presented the poster with \$120.00 in marked U.S. Currency. It was at that point that the poster was placed under arrest.

The poster was identified as W/F Quinn Lauren Rogers 7-20-1988. Rogers was charged with Florida State Statute 414.39 (2) Public assistance Fraud and transported to the Highlands County Jail.

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