

# PRESS RELEASE

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### Insurance Fraud Investigation Leads to Lake Bottom

**Phoenix** – Arizona Department of Insurance Fraud Unit agents arrested Terry Kirk on January 18, 2005, for Insurance Fraud, Theft, and Fraud Schemes, arising from a suspicious auto theft claim Kirk filed on his 1999 Chevy S-10 Blazer.

On November 21, 2004 Kirk reported the Blazer stolen to El Mirage Police Department and subsequently filed a claim with his insurance company. Kirk's insurance company paid over \$10,000 to the lien holder on the vehicle and paid Kirk \$200 for personal belongings allegedly in the stolen vehicle.

Soon thereafter, the Fraud Unit received a tip that the stolen vehicle reports were false and that Kirk allegedly pushed the Blazer off a boat dock into the private lake at Desert Harbor community (91<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Thunderbird in Peoria, Arizona) in the early morning hours of November 20, 2004. The informant advised Fraud Unit agents that Kirk possibly dumped the vehicle in the lake because of major mechanical problems and the large sum of money Kirk still owed on the vehicle.

On January 15, 2005, members of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Posse Dive Unit conducted a search of the Desert Harbor Lake at the Fraud Unit's request and located and recovered the Blazer (video available).

If convicted of any of the felony charges, Insurance Fraud, Theft, or Fraud Schemes, the penalty could include restitution, probation, fines and/or prison.

#### Insurance Fraud

Insurance fraud effects all of us. Next to tax evasion, insurance fraud is the most expensive white collar crime in the U.S, costing Americans at least \$80 billion a year, or nearly \$950 for each family.<sup>1</sup>

#### About the Fraud Unit

The Legislature established the Fraud Unit in the Arizona Department of Insurance in 1994 to deter, investigate and facilitate convictions of insurance fraud, reducing the inflationary impact of fraud that insurers necessarily pass on to consumers through higher costs of insurance products.

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<sup>1</sup> Source, the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud, [www.insurancefraud.org](http://www.insurancefraud.org)