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News Release

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Eagan couple sentenced for aggravated identity theft, conspiracy to falsely use identification documents

The second of two defendants was sentenced today in federal court in connection with a scheme to steal others' identities for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining money and prescription drugs.

On May 6 in St. Paul, United States District Court Judge Paul Magnuson sentenced Eric Christopher Thorsen, 26, Eagan, to 61 months in prison and three years of supervised release on one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to use unlawfully five or more identification documents which were not issued to him and one count of aggravated identity theft. Thorsen, along with Amy Ruth Bergquist, was indicted on April 23, 2008, and he pleaded guilty on Sept. 16.

On Feb. 25, Judge Magnuson sentenced Bergquist, 31, Eagan, to 42 months in prison and three years of supervised release on one count of conspiracy and one count of aggravated identity theft. She pleaded guilty on Oct. 8.

Thorsen admitted to knowingly stealing and taking mail from other people's mailboxes, stealing other individuals' identification documents and using other people's identification documents to purchase products from unsuspecting merchants and to obtain money fraudulently from unsuspecting victims' bank accounts. Bergquist admitted to aiding and abetting Thorsen in these actions.

According to their respective plea agreements, Bergquist and Thorsen each admitted that their scheme involved bank fraud, and that the total loss amount is between \$30,000 and \$120,000. They also admitted that on July 30, 2007, and on Sept. 29, 2007, they were in possession of identification documents of other persons. Those documents were found by police while executing a search warrant in the two separate hotel rooms where Thorsen was staying.

According to their indictment, some of the targeted victims were people the two met on the Internet. Thorsen and Bergquist allegedly placed advertisements on the Internet seeking to meet

other adults to engage in sexual acts, and would meet those who responded to the ads in either a hotel room or a private residence. The indictment alleges that while Thorsen and Bergquist were inside one of these locations they would steal, among other items, an identification document of one of the other adults.

This case was the result of an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force and the Roseville Police Department, with assistance from other local law enforcement. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Erica H. MacDonald and Kimberly A. Svendsen.