



# NEWS

## R E L E A S E

**JOHN OXENDINE**  
COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE  
SAFETY FIRE COMMISSIONER  
INDUSTRIAL LOAN COMMISSIONER  
COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Seventh Floor, West Tower  
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
[www.gainsurance.org](http://www.gainsurance.org)

For Immediate Release  
October 30, 2009

Contact: Glenn Allen or Wayne Whitaker  
404-651-7902  
[inscomm@oci.ga.gov](mailto:inscomm@oci.ga.gov)

### **OXENDINE BUSTS AUTO INSURANCE FRAUD RING IN SAVANNAH**

**Atlanta** – Insurance Commissioner John W. Oxendine said a fraud ring operating in Savannah, Ga., collected nearly \$95,000 from six insurance companies by staging accidents and filing bogus claims.

The alleged ringleader, Joseph T. Morris Jr., 29, was arrested today and charged with three counts of insurance fraud and two counts of making false statements.

According to an investigation by Oxendine's office, 16 claims filed by Morris involved vehicles he owned or previously owned and people he was already associated with. Title histories show Morris sold vehicles to other parties who were then involved in "accidents" that he filed claims on.

The companies that were defrauded include AIG/ 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Allstate, GMAC, Mercury Insurance, SafeCo and Traveler's.

"Fraud like this causes everyone's premiums to go up," Oxendine said. "Thanks to my investigators, we have taken these people off the streets."

Morris was already on federal probation.

Insurance fraud is a felony with a penalty of two to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$10,000.

###