

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For More Information, contact:

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Claire Haynes (334) 242-7351

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AG ANNOUNCES ARRESTS OF FORMER AUTAUGAVILLE OFFICIALS

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange today announced the arrests of three former Autaugaville officials for multiple felony ethics and theft charges.

The former chairman of the Autauga County Commission, Daniel B. Chavers, 50, of Prattville, is a former chief of the Autaugaville Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) and is currently the head of the Autaugaville Water Works*. Ernest Terry Stoudemire, 51, of Autaugaville, also is a former chief of the Autaugaville VFD. Mack Cell Harmon, 61, of Autaugaville, is a former assistant chief of the Autaugaville VFD. Stoudemire was arrested yesterday morning by agents of the Attorney General's Office and the Autauga County Sheriff's Office. That afternoon, Harmon surrendered at the Autauga County Sheriff's Office, as did Chavers early this morning.

Attorney General Strange's Special Prosecutions Division presented evidence to an Autauga County grand jury on November 5, resulting in the return of indictments against the three on November 8.

The indictment** against Chavers charges him with:

- one count of intentionally using his official position as chief of the Autaugaville VFD for illegal personal gain of currency or checks,
- one count of first-degree theft by deception *and* one count of first-degree theft by unauthorized control of funds from the Autauga County Commission that were in possession of the Autaugaville VFD,
- one count of first-degree theft by deception *and* one count of first-degree theft by unauthorized control of funds from the State of Alabama which were in possession of the Midsouth Resource Conservation and Development Council,
- one count of intentionally using his official position as head of Autaugaville Water Works for illegal personal gain of currency or checks,
- one count of first-degree theft by deception *and* one count of first-degree theft by unauthorized control of funds from the Autauga County Commission, and
- one count of use of his official position as head of Autaugaville Water Works for illegal personal gain for the use of cellular telephones.

**Note: the charges referenced in the above indictment are of alleged activities regarding Chavers' positions with the Autaugaville VFD and Water Works.*

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The indictment** against Stoudemire charges him with:

- one count of intentionally using his official position as chief of the Autaugaville VFD for illegal personal gain of currency or a check, and
- one count of second-degree theft by deception *and* one count of second-degree theft by unauthorized control of Autaugaville Volunteer Fire Department funds.

The indictment** against Harmon charges him with:

- one count of intentionally using his official position as assistant chief of the Autaugaville VFD for illegal personal gain of currency or a check, and
- one count of second-degree theft by deception *and* one count of second-degree theft by unauthorized control of Autaugaville Volunteer Fire Department funds.

The ethics violations and first-degree theft charges are class B felonies, punishable by two to 20 years imprisonment and fines of up to \$30,000.00 for each count. Second-degree theft is a class C felony, punishable by one to 10 years imprisonment and fines of up to \$15,000.00.

No further information about the investigation or about the defendants' alleged crimes other than that stated in the indictment may be released at this time.

Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorney General Bill Lisenby and Special Agents of his Special Prosecutions Division for their outstanding work in these cases.

***An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*