



AG ANNOUNCES FELONY THEFT CONVICTION OF FORMER MADISON COMMISSION EMPLOYEE

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange announced the theft conviction today of a former public employee of the Madison County Commission. Deborah Kay Sims, 59, of Gurley, pleaded guilty to first-degree theft. She is to pay \$154,673 in restitution for funds stolen from the Madison County Commission, and sentencing is set for June 20.

According to information stated by prosecutors at today's hearing in Madison County Circuit Court, Sims had access as an employee of the Madison County Commission to public funds in the Madison County Fishing Rodeo account. She wrote checks and used a charge card to obtain cash and personal items that she kept for herself.

After irregularities were noticed in this account, Madison County Commissioners requested a special audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts and also sent the matter to the Alabama Ethics Commission. Both agencies referred the matter to the Attorney General's Special Prosecutions Division, which conducted an investigation along with the Ethics Commission.

The Attorney General's Special Prosecutions Division presented evidence to a Madison County grand jury on March 11, resulting in Sims' indictment and leading to today's conviction. Sims faces a potential penalty of two to 20 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$30,000 for the class B felony.

"This defendant abused her public trust to steal more than \$150,000 from a public fund, and I am pleased that we are recovering the stolen funds for the citizens of Madison County," said Attorney General Strange. "Today's conviction should send a message to all public employees that they will be held to account if they steal taxpayers' money."

Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorney General Bill Lisenby and Special Agents of his Special Prosecutions Division, and thanked employees of the Madison County Commission, the Examiners of Public Accounts and the Alabama Ethics Commission.

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