

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2014

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Page 1 of 1

AG ANNOUNCES JAIL SENTENCE AND RESTITUTION FOR FORMER AUTAUGA COUNTY OFFICIAL

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange today announced that a former chairman of the Autauga County Commission will serve time in jail for his felony ethics and theft convictions. Danny Chavers, of Prattville, was sentenced this morning in Autauga County Circuit Court to 46 months for five felony charges: two for violations of the state ethics law, and three for first-degree theft, all class B felonies. The sentences were partially suspended, and Chavers was ordered to serve six months in jail followed by 24 months of supervised probation, perform 320 hours of community service, and to pay \$240,675.04 in restitution, along with court costs and a contribution to the Alabama Victim's Crime Compensation Fund.

Chavers pleaded guilty on March 12, 2014, related to theft and use of his office for personal gain while serving as chief of the Autaugaville Volunteer Fire Department and head of the Autaugaville Water Works. As chief of the Autaugaville VFD, Chavers used his office to obtain personal gain for himself by using money in the VFD account for personal purchases such as merchandise from Victoria's Secret, restaurants and hotels in Florida, gas stations, online gambling and a casino in Mississippi, in the amount of more than \$240,000. Regarding the theft from the State of Alabama, Chavers falsified documentation in order to obtain a \$4,800 grant, placed these grant funds in the VFD account, and continued to make personal purchases with this money. Also, Chavers used his position as head of the Autaugaville Water Works to obtain two checks totaling \$49,000 from the Autauga County Commission, which was supposed to go to the town of Autaugaville but which Chavers instead placed in the VFD fund and continued to use for personal purchases.

"These are serious crimes involving extensive betrayal of the public trust and theft of taxpayers' money," said Attorney General Strange. "I am pleased that this defendant stands convicted of these crimes. Mr. Chavers will have to pay back every penny he stole from the taxpayers and will serve time in jail for it."

Related charges still are pending against Ernest Terry Stoudemire of Autaugaville also former chief of the Autaugaville VFD; and Mack Cell Harmon of Autaugaville, a former assistant chief of the Autaugaville VFD. Attorney General Strange's Special Prosecutions Division presented evidence to an Autauga County grand jury on November 5, 2013, resulting in indictments* against the three.

Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorneys General Bill Lisenby and Pete Smyczek, as well as 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.*

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