

For Immediate Release
April 14, 2011

**FORMER NEW MEXICO CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT
OFFICIAL INDICTED ON FEDERAL BRIBERY CHARGES**

Former Facilities Manager Allegedly Solicited and Accepted \$237,080 in Bribes in Exchange for Steering Corrections Department Construction Jobs to Roofing Company

ALBUQUERQUE – A federal grand jury has indicted **Laurie Chapman**, 50, the former Facilities Manager for the New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD), on bribery charges in connection with work performed for NMCD. The 30-count indictment generally alleges, between February 2007 and August 2009, Chapman corruptly solicited and accepted an aggregate of \$237,080 in bribes from Omni Development Corporation (Omni), a roofing company, in exchange for selecting Omni to perform numerous facilities maintenance and construction jobs valued at \$4,000,000 at NMCD facilities.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that the indictment is the result of a ten-month investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The grand jury returned the indictment on April 13, 2011, and it was publicly posted by the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico late this afternoon. The indictment charges Chapman with 30 counts of theft or bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds. If convicted on any single count of bribery, Chapman faces up to ten years' imprisonment, a maximum \$250,000 fine, and up to three years of supervised release. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of any property that constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to the offenses charged and a money judgment in the amount of \$237,080.00, the money involved in the offenses.

The United States District Court has not yet set a date for Chapman to make her initial

appearance and to be arraigned on the indictment.

According to the indictment, NMCD is an agency that receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, and is responsible for administering and maintaining correctional facilities in New Mexico. The indictment alleges that, in her capacity as NMCD Facilities Manager, Chapman selected vendors to perform maintenance and repairs on buildings operated by NMCD. In March 2007, Chapman allegedly implemented a “price agreement” procedure that permitted her to select a roofing company to perform work for NMCD without going through a competitive bidding process. The indictment alleges that, between 2007 and 2009, Omni was the only company listed on NMCD’s roofing company price agreement, and that Chapman used the price agreement to select Omni to perform numerous facilities maintenance and construction jobs at NMCD facilities, for which Omni was paid approximately \$4,000,000.

The indictment alleges that, between February 2007 and August 2009, Chapman corruptly solicited and accepted money payments from Omni and its owner in exchange for selecting Omni to perform work at NMCD facilities. The payments allegedly were made by cash, online transfers, checks and credit card payments, and included payments made to Zia Construction, Inc., a company incorporated by Chapman using her maiden name that did not do any work in exchange for the payments. The indictment identifies 30 separate payments – ranging from \$1,000 to \$39,000 – allegedly made by Omni to Chapman and her company and which allegedly constituted bribes for work Chapman awarded to Omni.

In announcing the indictment, United States Attorney Gonzales said: “Each year, millions of federal and state taxpayers’ dollars are allocated to government agencies in New Mexico, and we necessarily trust that employees of those agencies will use the funds for their intended purposes. While the vast majority of government employees are honest in their work

and committed to serving their fellow citizens, some choose to abuse the public's trust. Corruption of this nature strikes at the heart of good government and erodes public confidence. According to the indictment, Ms. Chapman colluded with a private company to steal taxpayers' money. This kind of betrayal of the public's trust cannot and will not be tolerated. The indictment in this case reflects my Office's continuing commitment to work with the FBI and its other law enforcement partners to root out public corruption and prosecute those who put personal greed ahead of public service."

Carol K.O. Lee, Special Agent in Charge of the Albuquerque Division of the FBI, said: "I would like to recognize the FBI agents in New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, who, with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, worked on this important public corruption case. Public corruption is the FBI's top criminal priority because it undermines our nation's security and the people's trust in government. Public corruption in these difficult financial times also costs taxpayers millions of dollars. The Albuquerque FBI and its law enforcement partners recently formed a Regional Public Corruption Working Group to share intelligence and resources. The FBI also has a new hotline New Mexico residents can call to report public corruption: 505-889-1580."

The case was investigated by the FBI with assistance from the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Tara C. Neda and Cynthia L. Weisman.

An indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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