

NEWS RELEASE

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS*

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For Immediate Release

APRIL 13, 2004

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on April 8, 2004, **VON A. EASLEY**, age 38, of 1400 N. Illinois Ave., Carbondale, Illinois, was arrested on a seven-count Indictment charging Causing Fraudulent Claims for Tax Refunds, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 287. The Indictment alleges that the fraudulent claims for refunds of federal income taxes were each based on fraudulently prepared W-2 employee withholding statements. All of the violations took place in 2002 in Jackson County, Illinois. *An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.* Each of the seven offenses carry a total statutory range of punishment of up to five [5] years imprisonment, three years supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000, and mandatory restitution.

The prosecution is the result of an investigation conducted by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations. The Internal Revenue Service has a Questionable Refund Program designed to identify fraudulent returns, to stop the payment of fraudulent refunds, and to refer identified fraudulent refund schemes for criminal investigation and prosecution. The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Norman R. Smith.