

# United States Attorney's Office - Southern District of West Virginia

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2008

In matters prosecuted by the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of West Virginia:

### THREE PLEAD GUILTY TO CHARGES RELATING TO TAX FRAUD SCHEME

BECKLEY, WV – Three people pled guilty today before United States District Judge Thomas E. Johnston to charges stemming from a major tax fraud scheme. [...]

**SHERYL LYNN LESTER, 29, of Pineville, WV, MICHELLE ANN PREISS, 34, of East Bend, NC, and MICHAEL LOMAN EDWARDS, 45, also of East Bend, NC,** each entered guilty pleas to one-count Informations charging them with conspiracy to defraud the United States. At their plea hearings today, the trio admitted they conspired with each other to defraud the Internal Revenue Service of more than \$45,000 by falsely claiming Earned Income Credits for clients of TAX MAX, a tax return preparation business in East Bend and Mount Airy, NC.

**LESTER, PREISS, and EDWARDS** each face up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. They remain free on bond pending their sentencing hearings which are scheduled for June 2, 2008.

The Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division conducted the investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Hunter P. Smith Jr. is handling the prosecution.

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