



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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CONTACT: Jane W. Duke
United States Attorney
501-340-2600

SHERIDAN WOMAN INDICTED IN 152-COUNT FRAUD INDICTMENT

LITTLE ROCK – Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas and Brian T. Marr, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Little Rock Field Office of the United States Secret Service, announced that Katherine A. West, age 38, of Sheridan, Arkansas, was indicted today by a federal grand jury. The indictment charges West with seven counts of mail fraud and 145 counts of bank fraud.

The charges stem from West's theft of money from her place of employment, Lift Truck Service Center, Inc. The indictment alleges that initially West, who was employed as an accounting clerk with Lift Truck from July 2001 to August 29, 2006, caused company checks to be mailed to her own personal creditors by manipulating the company's invoice payment system. The personal bills that West paid through the company included utilities and cable television for her home. Payments were also made on multiple personal credit card accounts and a personal vehicle loan. The unauthorized payments on West's personal bills totaled approximately \$162,926.87.

The indictment further alleges that over approximately a two-year period, West caused company checks to be issued to fictitious businesses. She then took those checks and deposited them into a checking account that she had opened in the name of P & K Enterprises and which she controlled. These deposits totaled approximately \$535,946.19. That money was then converted to her own use and benefit.

Duke stated, "This was a very calculated and extensive fraud scheme. It was perpetrated by someone who enjoyed a position of trust in the victim company. Actions like those alleged in the indictment have the potential to seriously impact businesses operating in our state." Duke added, "Given the current economic situation, business owners are facing enough challenges; criminal conduct by their employees shouldn't present one more."

The maximum statutory penalty for each count of mail fraud is 20 years imprisonment. The maximum statutory penalty for each count of bank fraud is 30 years imprisonment. Every count carries a potential fine of \$250,000.

This investigation was conducted by agents with the Little Rock Field Office of the United States Secret Service and the United States Postal Inspection Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jana Harris.

An indictment contains only allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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