



PRESS NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPARTANBURG COUNTY COUPLE PLEADS GUILTY TO
EVADING FEDERAL INCOME TAXES
No tax returns filed since 1991

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney W. WALTER WILKINS stated today that ROBERT M. "MARK" LEDFORD, age 55, and CHERYL H. LEDFORD, age 61, of the Glenn Springs area of Spartanburg County, South Carolina, pled guilty today in federal court in Anderson, to income tax evasion, a violation of Title 26, United States Code, Section 7201. Senior United States District Judge G. Ross Anderson, Jr. accepted the guilty pleas and will impose sentences after he has reviewed presentence reports which will be prepared by the U.S. Probation Office.

Evidence presented at the change of plea hearing established that the

LEDFORDS have not filed U.S. individual income tax returns since 1991. Between 1992 and 1995, ROBERT LEDFORD owned and operated a nursery business in Spartanburg, South Carolina, from which he derived substantial income upon which no income taxes were paid. In 1997, the Internal Revenue Service assessed him federal taxes, exclusive of penalties and interest, in the amount of \$822,065.00. ROBERT LEDFORD, aided by CHERYL LEDFORD, took steps to avoid the payment of those taxes by, among other things, placing income, funds and property into the names of nominee organizations some of which were controlled by the LEDFORDS and by converting assets into cash.

In 2005, ROBERT LEDFORD purchased and operated a garden center from which taxable income was derived. Again, no taxes were paid and nominee organizations were utilized to receive money from the garden center. Money from the nominee organizations was deposited into CHERYL LEDFORD's personal bank account which she used to pay personal expenses.

Mr. Wilkins stated the maximum penalty the LEDFORDS can receive is a fine of \$250,000.00 and/or imprisonment for 5 years, plus a special assessment of \$100.00.

The case was investigated by special agents of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation. Trial Attorney Michael C. Boteler of the United States Department of Justice's Tax Division in Washington and Assistant United States Attorney William C. Lucius of the Greenville office handled the case.

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