



Department of Justice

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LEEDS WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO QUARTER MILLION DOLLAR MAIL FRAUD AND FILING FALSE INCOME TAX RETURNS

BIRMINGHAM, AL - Beverly Byers, 46, of Leeds, Alabama, has pled guilty to mail fraud and filing false income tax returns. She was charged November 29, 2007, in a two-count criminal information.

“When employees use their position to enrich themselves, the system is exploited,” stated U.S. Attorney Alice H. Martin. “Those employees should, and will be held accountable for violating the trust that was placed in them by their employers.”

According to the Plea Agreement filed January 31, 2008, Byers was an office manager/bookkeeper employed by Plateau Construction Company, Inc., also located in Leeds, from the early 1990s until April 2005. Beginning in 2002 and continuing until 2004, Byers used her position in the Company to embezzle funds from a company checking account. She did this two ways. First, by writing checks paying herself in excess of her salary, and second, by writing unauthorized company checks to pay her personal expenses, in the approximate amount of \$249,454. The checks were then mailed to various places in Alabama and other states. On April 17, 2005, Byers filed with the Internal Revenue Service form 1040 reporting her income as \$26,777 for tax year 2004. Byers knowingly failed to report \$90,576.27 on her 2004 Income Tax Return.

Byers could receive a maximum penalty of twenty-three years in prison, and a fine of up to \$500,000. A sentencing date is scheduled for May 28, 2008, in U.S. District Court.

“The prosecution of individuals who intentionally conceal their income, even if obtained from an illegal source, is a vital element in maintaining public confidence in our tax system,” stated Acting Special Agent in Charge Kimberly Lappin, IRS Criminal Investigations. “We should not expect the honest taxpayer to foot the bill for those who choose to hide their income from the IRS.”

This matter was investigated by Special Agents with the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Assistant United States Attorney Michael W. Whisonant is prosecuting this case on behalf of the U.S. Government.

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