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Fort Kent Woman Pleads Guilty to Theft of Public Money and Aggravated Identity Theft

Bangor, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced that **Sharon L. Forest**, 60, of Fort Kent, pleaded guilty on March 17, 2009, in U.S. District Court in Bangor, Maine, to theft of public money and aggravated identity theft. Forest faces a possible sentence of up to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000 for theft of public money, and an additional two-year mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for the aggravated identity theft.

Court records reveal that Sharon Forest unlawfully obtained six credit cards, using the Social Security Number, date of birth and other personal information of another individual, and without that individual's knowledge. Documents filed with the court further reveal that Forest completed an application and certifications in the name of that same victim in order to receive federal funds for rental assistance, despite knowing that neither she nor the victim of her identity theft qualified for the housing benefits. The defendant received in excess of \$18,000 in federal rental assistance from 1999 through April of 2007 and used the funds for her own personal benefit and gain, according to court records.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Fort Kent, Maine Police Department.

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