



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Public Affairs  
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## TRIBAL LEADER IN ARIZONA PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF \$300,000 IN TRIBAL FUNDS

PHOENIX - Evelyn James, 54, of Tuba City, Ariz. and a Tribal Council member of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe in Arizona, pleaded guilty today to False Statements, Theft from a Tribal Government Receiving Federal Funds and Money Laundering. In the course of her guilty plea, she admitted to stealing almost \$300,000 in tribal funds. Sentencing is set before U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Martone on September 28, 2009 at 1:30 p.m.

James intermittently served as the Tribal President of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe and in that capacity, completed, signed and submitted false statements and records to obtain funds for the tribe from the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. Administered through the Department of Justice, COPS provides financial assistance to eligible police departments to help improve community policing efforts.

James submitted falsified accountings in which she asked for reimbursement from the COPS program for expenditures that were never made by the tribe. The false submissions indicated that the tribe hired and paid three police officers when no police officers were ever hired, trained or employed. Through James's false submissions, the tribe wrongfully received approximately \$224,997 in grant funds from the COPS program. Beginning in 2005, James wrote checks to herself from money drawn on the tribal bank account. During 2005, James stole approximately \$300,000 in tribal funds in this fashion.

A conviction for False Statements carries a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. A conviction for Theft from Indian Tribal Government Receiving Federal Funds carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. A conviction for Transactional Money Laundering carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Martone will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation was conducted by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution was handled by Leta Hollon and Peter Sexton, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-1035-PCT-FJM  
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