



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: Friday, July 24, 2009

Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Obtaining Convictions for Unemployment Compensation Fraud

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that the Department has successfully prosecuted several Alabamians for unemployment compensation fraud. The following individuals were charged with violating the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law by making false statements in claims for benefits.

- April Sims, of Monroeville, was tried in Monroe County District Court on July 21, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Sims received a total of \$2,697.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Sims was found guilty and fined \$250.00 and sentenced to one year in the county jail, which was suspended for 24 months. She was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Briana Crittenden, of Opp, waived the right to trial in Covington County District Court on July 20, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Crittenden received a total of \$1,506.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Crittenden pled guilty and was sentenced to serve 90 days in jail, which was suspended. She was fined \$80.00. She was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Martina Lovelace, of Elba, waived the right to trial in Coffee County District Court on June 11, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Webb received a total of \$698.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Lovelace pled guilty and was sentenced to serve 30 days in jail, which was suspended. She was also fined \$75.00 and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

“We at the Department of Industrial Relations want people to know that we are aggressively pursuing cases of unemployment compensation fraud,” said Surtees. “Especially in these economic times, we want to make sure that all who are entitled to benefits receive them. But at the same time, we will not allow those who deliberately try to defraud the system to go unpunished. We are working with local District Attorney Offices to make sure that we can identify and prosecute those individuals who are committing these crimes.”

Suspected unemployment compensation fraud may be reported to the Department of Industrial Relations by calling 1-800-392-8019.

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Members of the media seeking more information should contact Public Information Officer Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.