

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG ANNOUNCES JAIL SENTENCE FOR FORMER MADISON COUNTY COMMISSION EMPLOYEE

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange announced a former public employee of the Madison County Commission will serve jail time. Deborah Kay Sims, 59, of Gurley, today was sentenced to 8 years for first-degree theft. Her sentence will be split, with one year to be served in the Madison County Jail followed by three years of probation. Sims also was ordered to pay \$154,673 in restitution for funds stolen from the Madison County Commission.

The Attorney General's Special Prosecutions Division presented evidence to a Madison County grand jury on March 11, resulting in Sims' indictment and leading to her conviction. Sims pleaded guilty to first-degree theft on May 8 in Madison County Circuit Court.

According to information stated by prosecutors at the May 8 hearing, Sims had access as an employee of the Madison County Commission to public funds in the Madison County Fishing Rodeo account. She wrote checks and used a charge card to obtain cash and personal items that she kept for herself.

After irregularities were noticed in this account, Madison County Commissioners requested a special audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts and also sent the matter to the Alabama Ethics Commission. Both agencies referred the matter to the Attorney General's Special Prosecutions Division, which conducted an investigation along with the Ethics Commission.

"Ms. Sims betrayed the public's trust by stealing more than \$150,000 from a public fund, and I am pleased that she will have to repay every penny she stole from the citizens of Madison County and will serve time in jail for it," said Attorney General Strange. "This conviction should send a message to all public employees that stealing taxpayers' money will not be tolerated."

Attorney General Strange commended Assistant Attorney General Bill Lisenby and Special Agents of his Special Prosecutions Division for their excellent work in this case. He also thanked employees of the Madison County Commission, the Examiners of Public Accounts and the Alabama Ethics Commission for their invaluable assistance.



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