

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES FELONY ETHICS CONVICTION OF FORMER AUTAUGAVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF ERNEST STOUDEMIRE

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced the conviction today of a former fire chief for the Autaugaville Volunteer Fire Department for felony violation of the ethics law. Ernest Stoudemire, 52, pleaded guilty to using his office for personal gain. Sentencing is set for September 22.

Stoudemire’s conviction was based on evidence that he and the former assistant fire chief, Mack Harmon, solicited a \$1,000 donation for the department, but instead kept the money for themselves. No one else in the Fire Department knew of this transaction, and the chief and assistant chief were not authorized to take the money for their personal use. Harmon was convicted in July of 2014 for use of his office for personal gain.

“These are serious crimes and are part of an extensive pattern of betrayal of the public trust in Autaugaville,” said Attorney General Strange. “My Special Prosecutions Division has conducted a thorough investigation and prosecution to ensure that the citizens of this town can have confidence in their public servants.”

In a related case, former Autauga County Commissioner Danny Chavers, who also was a former chief of the Autaugaville Volunteer Fire Department and former head of the Autaugaville Water Works, pleaded guilty in March of 2014 to theft and use of his office for personal gain at the Fire Department.

Attorney General Strange commended those involved in bringing these cases to a successful conclusion, noting in particular Assistant Attorney General Bill Lisenby of his Criminal Trials Division, Deputy Attorney General Pete Smyczek of his Special Prosecutions Division, and Special Agents of the Special Prosecutions Division.

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