



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

For Immediate Release: September 29, 2009

Alabamians Charged with Unemployment Compensation Fraud

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that the following individuals were successfully prosecuted for violating the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law. They were charged with making false statements in claims for unemployment benefits:

- Michael Earl Brooks, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County District Court on September 28, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Brooks received a total of \$1,933.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Brooks was found guilty and sentenced to one year, which was suspended for 24 months. He was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Stephanie Strong, of Selma, was tried in Dallas County District Court on September 23, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Strong received a total of \$3,220.00 in unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled.

Strong was found guilty and sentenced to six months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. She was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Adriane Austin, of Fairfield, was tried in Jefferson County District Court on September 8, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Austin received a total of \$3,780.00 in unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled.

Austin pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, suspended for 24 months. She was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Iris K. Stockdale, of Talladega, was tried in Talladega County District Court on September 2, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment

Control Section determined that Stockdale received a total of \$2,391.00 in unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled.

Stockdale was found guilty and sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended for 12 months. She was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Willie Houston, of Wedowee, was tried in Randolph County District Court on September 1, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Houston received a total of \$2,760.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Houston was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months, which was suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to perform 68 hours of community service and to pay court costs and the 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.