



# Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

## News Release

For Immediate Release: December 9, 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:

- Kimberly K. Sykes, of Hayneville, was tried in Lowndes County District Court on November 17, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Sykes received a total of \$2,363.00 in unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled.

Sykes pled guilty and was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally. She must have the debt paid in 24 months.

- Myron Barnes, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County District Court on October 28, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Barnes received a total of \$2,470.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Barnes was found guilty and sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. He was fined \$200 and also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Melvin Orr, of Lincoln, was tried in Talladega County District Court on December 3, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Orr received a total of \$3,625.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Orr was found guilty and was sentenced to 12 months in jail, suspended for 24 months. He was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Timothy Palmer, of Northport, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on November 18, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Palmer received a total of \$2,940.00 in

unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

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

- Damien Ricardo Andrews, of Bay Minette, was tried in Baldwin County District Court on October 22, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Chatman received a total of \$1,567.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Andrews was found guilty and sentenced to 6 months, which was suspended for 12 months. He was fined \$100 and also ordered to pay court costs and 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.*