



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Louisiana

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FLORIDA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO WIRE FRAUD AND AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney Donald J. Cazayoux, Jr. announced that ARNOLD H. THOMAS, 47, of Fernandina Beach, Florida, pled guilty today before United States District Court Chief Judge Brian A. Jackson, to one count of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft. THOMAS faces a maximum sentence of not less than 2 years and not more than 22 years, and fines of up to \$500,000.

According to the plea agreement filed with the Court, THOMAS devised a scheme to defraud the Louisiana Workforce Commission by submitting false quarterly wage reports in the names of fictitious companies and then filing false applications for unemployment benefits in the names of various third parties. In all, THOMAS submitted approximately 392 false applications resulting in a loss of approximately \$1,254,533.

David C. Wickersham, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Dallas Region for the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations stated, "Today's guilty plea highlights the Office of Inspector General's efforts to combat schemes that compromise the integrity of the Department of Labor's UI program. The OIG will continue to aggressively investigate these types of crimes."

United States Attorney Donald J. Cazayoux, Jr. stated, "The conviction of this defendant demonstrates our office's strong commitment to aggressively prosecute anyone who defrauds our public assistance programs for their personal gain."

The investigation of THOMAS was conducted by the United States Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General and the Social Security Administration – Office of Inspector General, with the assistance of the Louisiana Workforce Commission. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Rich Bourgeois who serves as Deputy Criminal Chief.

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