



Department of Justice

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Pella Woman Pleads Guilty to Mail Fraud

DES MOINES, IA – Beverly Joan DeRonde, age 61, of Pella, Iowa, pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud in a proceeding before United States Magistrate Judge Ross A. Walters, announced United States Attorney Nicholas A. Klinefeldt. Sentencing has been scheduled for April 5, 2013, at the United States Courthouse in Des Moines before Chief Judge James E. Gritzner.

DeRonde was charged with multiple counts of mail fraud in an indictment filed on August 28, 2012. The indictment alleged that DeRonde obtained approximately \$731,950 as a result of these offenses.

In a written plea agreement filed on January 4, 2013, DeRonde admitted that she engaged in a scheme to defraud multiple individuals and obtain money by false pretenses over a seven-year period, from January 2003 through June 2010. DeRonde would ask various friends, relatives, and acquaintances to loan her money, supposedly for surprise birthday or anniversary presents for her husband or to purchase equipment for a boat repair shop. She promised large amounts of interest and often would write a check at the time of the purported loan, instructing the individual loaning the money not to negotiate the check until a later date.

DeRonde admitted that she did not use the loan proceeds as represented but, instead, used the money to purchase antiques, jewelry, Rolex watches, and other consumer items. She also used loan proceeds to repay loans she previously had obtained from other individuals. She admitted to using the United States mails to send letter to various individuals with excuses why

she was unable to repay the loans, promising a new date by which she would have the money, and often instructing the individuals to keep the loans a secret from her husband.

DeRonde faces a maximum penalty of up to 20 years in prison, a maximum fine of \$250,000, or both a fine and imprisonment. Additionally, under the plea agreement, DeRonde has agreed that the sentencing judge should impose an order of restitution for all relevant conduct and to the forfeiture of certain property found at her residence and a storage unit, which was purchased with the proceeds of the mail fraud. DeRonde remains released, under the supervision of the United States Probation Office, pending imposition of sentence.

This case was investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service, and was prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa.

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