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June 5, 2014

MADIGAN CHARGES FORMER GRUNDY COUNTY OFFICIAL WITH THEFT, OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT***Former County Official Indicted on Charges of Stealing \$44,000 in County Funds***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced charges against a former Grundy County official for stealing \$44,000 in county funds to spend on personal shopping trips, meals at restaurants and visits to hair and nail salons.

Renaë Chronister, 45, of Morris, appeared today in Grundy County Criminal Court before Judge Robert Marsaglia to face one count of theft, a Class 1 felony, and one count of official misconduct, a Class 3 felony.

Madigan alleged that from 2009 to 2012, Chronister stole the money while working as bookkeeper for the Grundy County Health Department. Madigan alleged Chronister executed the scheme by pocketing cash paid to the health department by area residents and businesses for county services, including immunizations, mental health counseling and public health inspections.

An investigation by Madigan's office, based on a referral from the Grundy County State's Attorney's office, found a pattern of repeated cash deposits into Chronister's bank accounts totaling \$44,000 from 2009 to 2013. Madigan's investigation revealed Chronister used the funds for personal purchases, including dining out daily at restaurants, multiple shopping trips for clothing and numerous hair and nail salon visits.

"The defendant abused her position and access to public funds to fund shopping sprees and take trips to the salon at the expense of Grundy County taxpayers," Madigan said.

As bookkeeper Chronister was tasked with keeping track of money received within the health department and its three different divisions: environmental, mental health and nursing. The county detected in 2012 that cash was not being consistently deposited with the county treasurer's office from the health department and ordered an audit, which revealed the missing funds. Chronister was terminated from her position in February 2013.

Assistant Attorneys General David Navarro and Kathleen Duhig and Associate Director Louis Dolce are handling the case for Madigan's Public Integrity Bureau with assistance from the Grundy County Sheriff's office. The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty by a court of law.

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