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MADIGAN: MONTGOMERY COUNTY MAN IN CUSTODY FOR TAX FRAUD

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced a Montgomery County business owner surrendered today to law enforcement after pleading guilty to evading more than \$40,000 in sales tax payments to the state.

Long Clayton, 50, of Hillsboro, pleaded guilty in Montgomery County Circuit Court to one count of sales tax evasion and one count of aggravated identity theft, both of which are Class 2 felonies. Clayton was sentenced to three years in the Illinois Department of Corrections and agreed to pay restitution of \$44,934.68 to the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) as well as \$2,030.11 to Ameren Illinois.

As the owner of the Cozy Café, 633 S. Main St. in Hillsboro, Clayton allegedly convinced current and former employees to register the café under their names in order to use their Illinois business tax numbers to report sales in an attempt to evade paying more than \$40,000 in taxes. Clayton fraudulently used those business tax numbers due to his own business tax number being revoked by IDOR for delinquency in paying previous taxes. Clayton also allegedly fraudulently used a Social Security number of a former employee with a developmental disability to open a utility account through Ameren Illinois.

"This defendant has illegally profited at the expense of the state and his employees," Madigan said. "Business owners that violate state tax laws will be held accountable."

"Individuals who defraud our tax system and commit acts of forgery must be held accountable," said Revenue Director Connie Beard. "I applaud the efforts of Revenue's Criminal Investigation Division, as well as the Attorney General's Office in this case. My office will continue to work with the Attorney General to ensure that lawbreakers are held accountable and that full restitution is paid on behalf of taxpayers."

The case was investigated by IDOR's Criminal Investigations Division and referred to Madigan's office for prosecution. Assistant Attorney General Gregory Stucka handled the case for Madigan's Special Prosecutions Bureau.

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