ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – A former Atlantic City Housing Authority employee was sentenced to five years in state prison for official misconduct, theft and tax fraud for defrauding and stealing a total of nearly $290,000 from the Housing Authority and the State of New Jersey, Acting Atlantic County Prosecutor Jim McClain announced today.

On Friday, Sept. 27, Brian Lewis, 42, of Pleasantville, was sentenced to prison after pleading guilty to five counts. On April 23, Lewis —who was indicted on 26 counts— pleaded guilty to second-degree official misconduct, second-degree theft, third-degree theft, third-degree filing a fraudulent tax return and third-degree failure to pay state tax.

In October of 2010, the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office Official Corruption Unit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation Public Corruption Task Force and the U.S. Department of Labor - OIG initiated a joint investigation after receiving information from the Housing Authority that some construction and repair jobs were paid to various contractors and the work had not been completed. The Housing Authority reported that some of the work was double and triple billed without completion.

The joint investigation revealed that beginning in 2009, Lewis— who served as an Assistant Buyer for the Housing Authority— used his position to access work orders and contracts for construction and home repairs for Stanley Holmes Village. He then created fraudulent shell companies and billed the Housing Authority for work, which had already been completed by legitimate companies, and collected the duplicate payments.

The investigation further revealed that Lewis also used his position to award his own fraudulent businesses contracts for construction and repair work, and then did not perform the work despite receiving payments to do so.

Over the course of 16 months, Lewis created at least five fraudulent businesses and defrauded the Housing Authority and the taxpayers of over $239,000 according to

acting First Assistant Prosecutor Diane Ruberton, who represented the State in the case.

During the course of the investigation, detectives also discovered that Lewis had collected unemployment benefits from 2006 to 2008, while he was a full-time employee at the Housing Authority. Lewis was charged with fraudulently collecting over $13,000 in unemployment benefits.

On May 1, 21012, Lewis turned himself into the Prosecutor's Office where he was processed and released on his own recognizance.

On Feb. 21, Lewis was indicted on three counts of official misconduct, five counts of theft, five counts of filing a false claim for payment of a government contract, five counts of fraudulently transacting business while acting as a public servant, one count of unsworn falsification to authorities, and an additional count of theft by deception for unemployment fraud.

Additionally, Lewis and his wife, Shellie Williams, 40, were both indicted on three counts of filing fraudulent tax returns and three counts of failure to pay state taxes.

Lewis and Williams were charged with the tax offenses as a result of a thorough investigation into the couples' finances by the New Jersey Department of Treasury - Office of Criminal Investigations. The investigation concluded that the couple failed to pay over $36,600 in state taxes by not reporting the money they fraudulently received.

The charges against Shellie Williams were dismissed upon amended tax returns being filed.

In accordance with the plea agreement, Lewis was sentenced to five years in New Jersey State Prison, of which he must serve four years before becoming eligible for parole. Lewis was also ordered to forfeit all current or future public employment.

Following sentencing, Lewis was remanded into custody.

Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at http://www.acpo.org/tips.html and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS) or visit the Crime Stoppers Website at http://www.crimestoppersatlantic.com/. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.