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More than \$590,000 restitution for unpaid sales tax ordered through criminal plea

Owners of three used car dealerships sentenced to felony convictions, restitution to the state

(Indianapolis, Ind.) Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry announced today that two owners of Indianapolis area car dealerships have been sentenced and ordered to pay restitution to the state for failure to remit taxes to the state. Amy Lair and Brandi Pierson underreported more than \$8.29 million in sales at three used car dealerships. Both defendants have pleaded guilty to felony charges and were ordered today to pay \$590,437 in restitution to the State of Indiana for unpaid sales taxes.

As part of the plea agreement, the defendants have agreed to turn over \$281,346 from previously seized funds toward the restitution balance. Those funds were seized by the Marion County Prosecutor's Office during the investigation of the dealerships.

Lair has pleaded guilty as charged to two counts of Failure to Remit Taxes Held in Trust (Class D Felonies). Per the plea agreement, she will pay \$43,538 from seized funds for unpaid taxes associated with the business Circle City Auto Connection and \$118,352 from seized funds for unpaid taxes associated with the business Circle City Auto Exchange. The restitution will be paid to the Indiana Department of Revenue. Lair will also serve a one-year suspended sentence on probation.

Pierson has pleaded guilty as charged to one count of Failure to Remit Taxes Held in Trust (Class D Felony) and was ordered to pay a total of \$428,546 in restitution to the Indiana Department of Revenue for unpaid taxes associated with the business Indy Auto Brokers. Per the plea agreement, \$119,455 will be paid from seized funds and the remaining balance of \$309,091 is to be remitted in installments. Pierson will also serve a two-year suspended sentence on probation.

"Let this be yet another notice to business owners that we will investigate and prosecute those who fail to fulfill their tax obligations," Prosecutor Terry Curry stated. "We appreciate the continued cooperation from the Indiana Department of Revenue in investigating and referring suspected criminal activity to our office. This partnership demonstrates the ongoing effort to hold business owners accountable."

A 2014 audit was completed for Indy Auto Brokers that highlighted discrepancies in the dealership's state tax forms. The audit showed more reported sales and tax collected than actual paid taxes. After this audit, it was discovered that Lair and Pierson held ownership over three used car dealerships involved and failed to remit taxes between 2011 and 2016.