

Woman gets six months in fraud

Sterling Oil official pleads guilty to falsley certifying bills from needy families

BY CHRIS DUMOND

cdumond@newsadvance.com

(434) 385-5531

A Forest woman was sentenced to six months incarceration Wednesday after pleading guilty to using her position at Sterling Oil to defraud a state program that helps needy people stay warm in the winter.

Donna Beeler Hensley, vice president of the company, pleaded guilty to 62 counts of falsely certifying heating oil bills submitted to the Department of Social Services. Hensley was fined \$10,000 and ordered to pay back \$6,055 bilked from the state.



Hensley

Lynchburg Circuit Court Judge Mosby Perrow ordered the woman to spend at least the first two months of her sentence in jail. If she is eligible under Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority guidelines, she may spend the remaining four months on house arrest, Perrow ruled.

Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Chuck Felmlee said the investigation began in 2008, when a former Sterling Oil employee contacted the Virginia State Police claiming the company was using corrupt practices to steal from the Virginia Energy Assistance Program.

See **FRAUD**, Page A4