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NEWS



Business Owner Charged In \$1.2 Million Procurement Fraud

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Claimed Her Business Was Owned and Operated by a Service-Disabled Veteran

NEWARK, N.J. – A Bergen County, N.J., woman was arrested this morning on charges that she fraudulently represented her company as a service-disabled veteran-owned small business in order to obtain more than \$1.2 million worth of government contracts set aside for disabled veterans, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Miriam Friedman, 54, of Teaneck, N.J., surrendered to special agents from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of the Inspector General, as a result of a federal criminal complaint charging her with wire fraud. She is scheduled to make her initial appearance today before U.S. Magistrate Judge James B. Clark III in Newark federal court.

According to the complaint unsealed today:

Friedman is the owner of Office Dimensions Inc., a company in Teaneck that sells furniture and design services to industrial and government customers. Friedman and her husband control Office Dimensions and all its revenues, as well as run the company's daily operations. Neither served in the U.S. military, but Friedman's father-in-law is a retired U.S. military veteran.

On Nov. 23, 2009, Friedman certified in a central registry for government contractors that Office Dimensions was a service-disabled veteran-owned small business. In her certification, she allegedly falsely claimed that her father-in-law was the owner and operator, even though he had very little involvement with Office Dimensions and was not service-disabled. Friedman then bid for VA contracts set aside for service-disabled veterans who own their businesses.

From January 2010 through November 2011, the VA paid Office Dimensions more than \$1.2 million on fraudulently obtained contracts to which Friedman was not entitled.

The wire fraud count with which Friedman was charged is punishable by a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross loss or gain cause by the offense.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jeffrey G. Hughes; the U.S. General Services Administration, Office of the Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James E. Adams; and IRS - Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Shantelle P. Kitchen, for the investigation leading to today's arrest.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott B. McBride of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Health Care and Government Fraud Unit in Newark.

The charges and allegations contained in the complaint are merely accusations and the defendant is considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

14-008

Defense counsel: Brian J. Neary Esq., Hackensack & Hoboken, N.J.

