

Comptroller office identifies alleged fraud, files charges against former Royal Lakes, IL., village clerk

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CARLINVILLE — Illinois State Comptroller Susan Mendoza announced Friday that forgery charges have been filed against the former village clerk of downstate Royal Lakes, Ill., following a red flag raised by the comptroller's office.

Earlier this year, the comptroller's office was made aware of suspicious activity involving an annual financial audit report for the village of Royal Lakes. The annual financial audit report the village is statutorily required to file with the comptroller's office appeared to be a previous-year report with only the dates changed, instead of a new report as required by state law.

Comptroller Mendoza's office then immediately alerted local authorities of the potential fraud. The public and the press rely on the accuracy of the reports collected by the comptroller's office.

Following an investigation by the Macoupin County Sheriff's Office, Macoupin County State's Attorney Jennifer Watson on Tuesday filed two counts of forgery against former Royal Lakes Village Clerk Angela Sanders in Macoupin County Circuit Court.

The forgery charges are Class 3 felonies which carry a sentence of up to five years imprisonment or fines of up to \$25,000 per offense.

"I'd like to thank the sheriff and the state's attorney for bringing these charges," Mendoza said. "And I would like to thank all the municipal officials around Illinois who follow the law and file accurate, timely reports with our office every year.

"These charges should send a strong message that this office takes very seriously our responsibility to be an independent truth-telling fiscal watchdog, striving for greater transparency and accountability in Illinois government."