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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
MIDDLE DISTRICT *of* TENNESSEE

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Tennessee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

## **Former Executive Director of Mississippi River Corridor-Tennessee Inc. Facing Federal Fraud Charges**

*NASHVILLE, Tenn. – February 20, 2019* – An indictment was unsealed today, charging Diana Threadgill, 66, of Memphis, Tennessee, with three counts of mail fraud, announced U.S. Attorney Don Cochran for the Middle District of Tennessee. Threadgill was arrested by federal agents this morning and will appear before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Memphis later today.

According to the indictment, Threadgill was the Executive Director of Mississippi River Corridor – Tennessee Inc. (MRCT), a Memphis-based non-profit organization whose mission was to “identify, conserve and enhance the region’s natural, cultural and recreational resources to improve the quality of life and prosperity in West Tennessee.”

The indictment alleges that beginning in October 2011 and continuing until March 29, 2017, Threadgill obtained grants on behalf of MRCT from federally funded government agencies, such as the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation (TDEC), and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). In 2013, Threadgill applied for and received one such grant from TDOT in the amount of \$1,512,000 for the purpose of building an interpretive visitor center at Reelfoot Lake. The Tennessee State Building Commission (SBC) provided an additional matching grant in the amount of \$372,000. Threadgill submitted reimbursement requests for expenses, which had previously been sought or reimbursed and obtained more than \$133,000 in additional reimbursement, which she used for her own personal benefit.

The indictment further alleges that Threadgill submitted fraudulent checks to TDOT, seeking and receiving reimbursements by representing that the checks had been cashed by vendors when, in reality, they had never been provided to the vendors.

Finally, the indictment alleges that Threadgill sought funding from TVA in March 2017, knowing that the MRCT Board of Directors had previously voted to dissolve the organization. She

obtained \$41,749.94 in addition to the duplicated funds that she had previously received from the federally funded agencies. The total loss amount in federal funds was \$174,921.84.

If convicted, Threadgill faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each count.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General; the TVA, Office of Inspector General; and the Tennessee Comptroller's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Sara Beth Myers is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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**Topic(s):**

Financial Fraud  
Public Corruption

**Component(s):**

USAO - Tennessee, Middle

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Updated February 20, 2019