

Zoval pleads not guilty to wire fraud

By Jessie Marchesseau

At a hearing Friday before a federal court judge, Lori Zoval pleaded not guilty to charges of wire fraud. A jury trial date is set for Sept. 13.

Zoval, a South Lake Tahoe woman indicted in July 2010 on three charges of wire fraud stemming from an alleged investment fraud scheme in 2005-06, was working as an investment banker in Folsom at the time.

The U.S. Attorney's Office offered Zoval a plea agreement in February. She decided not to take it.

"They submitted an offer that was just a little high," Zoval's attorney, Mark Reichel, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "But they've only heard one side of the story."

Reichel said that even though the potential sentence for the charges against Zoval are relatively low, additional time can be added on for what is known as uncharged relevant conduct. This means that Zoval's sentence could be increased for behavior for which she is not formally charged, something reflected in the plea agreement.

"The way I see it, there's a lot of equities in (Zoval's) corner," Reichel said. "Not every time money is lost, does it mean a crime was committed."

Lake Tahoe News reported in February about Zoval's alleged involvement in another investment scheme while employed by Holly's Place, a South Lake Tahoe vacation resort. The FBI has been in contact with the owners of Holly's Place. However, no charges have been brought against Zoval concerning her

interactions there.

The prosecuting attorney, Assistant U.S. Attorney Camil Skipper, could not be reached for comment.

A trial confirmation hearing is set for Aug. 26.