2 accused of defrauding Indian casinos

By Lake Tahoe News

Two men have been indicted on charges of stealing from three Indian casinos, including one in El Dorado County.

"Once the defendants fraudulently obtained the identification documents for their false identities, the defendants used the identification documents and false identities to open bank accounts, obtain credit, and create the perception of credit worthiness in their false identities," the federal indictment reads.

Vivian Wang, 53, of Lilburn, Georgia, and Frank Luo, 48, of Las Vegas are accused of wire fraud. Wang also face an aggravated identity theft charge.

The two are accused of defrauding Red Hawk, Thunder Valley and Cache Creek casinos from August 2008 to August 2014.

The U.S. Attorneys Office claims the duo stole $1.2 million from the casinos by using false IDs and Social Security numbers to apply for casino credit, or markers. A marker is a cash advance provided by a casino to a patron, and it is often secured by a check from the patron's bank account.

The defendants initially repaid the markers and several credit cards to give the impression of creditworthiness. They even intentionally lost money to gain credit.

Eventually the defendants depleted and closed the bank accounts provided to the casinos in their marker applications to prevent the casinos from recovering the money secured by the checks they had written against those accounts, and they did not pay back the credit card balances.

The two used the money to buy jewelry, precious metals, home appliances, international flights, luxury goods and clothing, according to court records.

If convicted, Wang and Luo face 20 years in prison and a $250,000 fine for each count of wire fraud. If convicted of aggravated identity theft, Wang faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 24 months in prison consecutive to any other sentence imposed.