Cheri Connell applied for benefits claming to be pregnant and no husband in the house. She was not pregnant and her husband lived with her. Cornell was sentenced May 31, 2005 after pleading guilty earlier in the year.

Judge gives welfare cheat six months

BLACKFOOT — A woman with a record of property crimes in Arkansas, Georgia, Massachusetts and now Shelley will spend six months in a rider program following her sentencing Tuesday.

Cherie Cornell admitted to felony welfare fraud and felony grand theft during October and December 2004 when she was living in Shelley.

Cornell told state Health and Welfare officials she was pregnant in order to receive additional financial aid, when she was not pregnant, according to court documents.

Cornell, 33, is a "scam artist," Deputy Bingham County Prosecutor Dave Hooste told 7th District Judge James Herndon.

Cornell convinced her neighbors in Shelley to loan her money and buy her a car after showing them fake legal documents indicating she would inherit $70 million, Hooste said.

The money never arrived and Cornell owes about $3,300 in restitution to two different Shelley families, Hooste said.

Cornell tearfully apologized for her actions, and Herndon said she must receive treatment for her mental conditions, which include bipolar, borderline personality, depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Herndon told Cornell, after discussing her past record, which include absconding from probation, that her history was "not good."

She was given a suspended prison sentence of one to five years and ordered to Cottonwood.