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JUSTICE NEWS

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Wyoming Used Car Dealer Convicted in Federal Court for Odometer Tampering*Odometer Rollbacks Often Exceeded 100,000 Miles*

WASHINGTON – After a two-week trial, a federal jury in Cheyenne, Wyo., today convicted Randy Lee (aka Jimmy Lee) on eleven of fourteen felony counts with which he was charged, the Justice Department announced. The jury convicted Lee of conspiracy, five counts of odometer tampering, and five counts of securities fraud related to fraudulent motor vehicle titles. The jury acquitted the Cheyenne resident of two counts of providing false odometer certifications and one count of mail fraud. According to the charges and the evidence presented at trial, from as early as 2002 and through at least 2006, the defendant defrauded buyers of used motor vehicles by misrepresenting the mileage of the vehicles when sold.

On July 23, 2009, a Casper, Wyo., grand jury returned an indictment charging Lee and a co-defendant, Jay Lee, in a 28-count indictment alleging the above offenses, all of which related to an odometer tampering scheme. Jay Lee remains at large. Anyone with information on his whereabouts is asked to contact the law enforcement officials identified below. Sentencing for Randy Lee has been scheduled for April 2, 2010.

The indictment alleged that the defendants, who bought and sold vehicles on behalf of a Cheyenne used-auto dealership, purchased pickup trucks in Wyoming and surrounding states, rolled back the odometers to false, lower mileages, obtained fraudulent Wyoming titles, and then resold the trucks to auto dealers and consumers in Wyoming and Colorado. The odometers were often rolled back over 100,000 miles. While some of the vehicles were sold with notice of an odometer discrepancy, none were sold with information about the size of the discrepancy.

"For most people, a car is one of the biggest investments they own, aside from their home. Dishonest dealers who hide a vehicle's high mileage cheat consumers out of their hard-earned money, impede intelligent buying choices and raise safety concerns by misrepresenting the true condition of the vehicles they sell," said Tony West, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division of the Department of Justice. "This sort of financial fraud strikes hard at those who can least afford it, and we will continue vigorously to prosecute those engaging in these illegal practices."

Assistant Attorney General West thanked the agencies which worked collaboratively to achieve this result. The underlying investigation was conducted by the Wyoming Department of Transportation's Office of Compliance and Investigation and the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in Denver. The case was prosecuted by the Department of Justice's Office of Consumer Litigation.

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Civil Division