



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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*United States Attorney
Western District of Washington*

FORMER ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF PLEADS GUILTY TO MAIL FRAUD
Defendant Operated Elaborate Scheme to Defraud South King Fire and Rescue

GRANT G. GASPARD, 51, of Olympia, Washington, pleaded guilty late yesterday to Mail Fraud in U.S. District Court in Seattle. Until he resigned July 31, 2008, GASPARD was an assistant chief of South King Fire and Rescue, which also is known as King County Fire Protection District No. 39. In his plea agreement GASPARD admits he fraudulently obtained more than \$500,000 from the fire district over several years. GASPARD will be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Ricardo S. Martinez on January 30, 2009.

GASPARD, as assistant chief of the district, was in charge of the district's financial and procurement operations. GASPARD admits he used his position with the fire district to initiate and approve phony invoices and purchase orders over a period of several years. GASPARD also submitted fraudulent documentation in support of thousands of dollars worth of improper purchases on his district-issued credit card. In his plea agreement, GASPARD admits that on December 28, 2007, GASPARD caused King County to send a check for \$98,000 to a mailbox he had set up in Tumwater, Washington.

South King Fire and Rescue is an independent government agency that provides fire protection and emergency services in the Federal Way and Des Moines areas of South King County. It is funded primarily by property tax assessments in the area it serves.

According to records filed in the case, in mid-July a fire district employee spotted some questionable transactions involving GASPARD and looked further into district records. The employee reported his findings to the district's chief, who suspended GASPARD on July 14, 2008. The next week, lawyers representing the district contacted federal law enforcement and the FBI investigation began.

GASPARD was arrested August 7, 2008, and was being held at the federal detention center pending his trial. Following his guilty plea, GASPARD was ordered released with restrictions on his travel and an order not to contact anyone at South King Fire and Rescue.

The case was investigated by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mark Parrent.

For additional information please contact Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office, at (206) 553-4110.