



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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For Information Contact Public Affairs
SANDY RAYNOR
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

BEEKEEPER WHO RECEIVED DISABILITY BENEFITS CONVICTED FOR FAILING TO REPORT HIS WORK ACTIVITIES

PHOENIX - Harold Wayne Pease, Jr., 62, of Avondale, Ariz., was found guilty today by a federal jury of Making a False Statement to the Social Security Administration. The case was tried before U.S. District Judge David G. Campbell from March 24 through 27. Pease remains out of custody pending sentencing which is set before Judge Campbell on Monday, June 22.

Pease became disabled from his job as a truck driver and began to receive Title II disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) around 1988. Following his initial award of disability benefits, he turned a beekeeping hobby into a family beekeeping business that earned money by removing live bees from residential and commercial properties, taking the bees back to his farm, selling the honey produced by the bees and renting the bees to farmers to pollinate their crops. Pease designed the company advertisements and was primarily responsible for all bee removals.

Despite these activities, Pease continued to receive disability benefits for nearly 20 years and did not report the income earned and activities performed as required by the SSA. From 1997 to 2007, Pease and his family received more than \$170,000 in monetary benefits from the SSA.

An Area Work Incentive Coordinator from the SSA testified that the agency encourages recipients of disability benefits to seek and attempt limited work while still receiving benefits, provided that the recipient reports all work attempts and activities. Pease completely failed to do so, including on the most recent document, a July 2006 Report of Continuing Disability.

A conviction for Making a False Statement carries a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Campbell will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, Office of Investigations. The prosecution was handled by Gary Restaino and Walter Perkel, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-367-PHX-DGC
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