



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Southern District of Georgia*

Post Office Box 8970

100 Bull Street

*Savannah, GA 31412
(912) 652-4422*

*Savannah, GA 31401
FAX (912) 652-4227*

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**CONTACT: Edmund A. Booth, Jr.
United States Attorney
(706) 724-0517
(912) 201-2515**

**UNITED STATES TO RECEIVE \$685,000 IN SETTLEMENT ALLEGATIONS OF
INFLATED BILLING TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FACILITIES**

SAVANNAH, GA: Edmund A. Booth, Jr., United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced that East Coast Fruit Company, Inc. of Georgia, through its successor company, R & J 123 Inc. of Georgia, agreed to pay the United States \$685,000 to settle allegations that it violated the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729, et seq. which prohibits the submission of false or fraudulent claims to the United States Government.

East Coast Fruit Company, Inc. of Georgia was based in Jacksonville, Florida, and it had a distribution facility in Savannah, Georgia. East Coast Fruit Company, Inc. of Georgia was awarded a contract by the Department of Defense (DOD) Defense Supply Center to provide a full line of fruits and vegetables to DOD facilities in South Carolina. From June 4, 2007 until December 16, 2007 the Savannah distribution facility was used to supply a full line of fruits and vegetables to DOD facilities in South Carolina pursuant to a \$6.4 million contract. The government alleged that East Coast Fruit Company, Inc. of Georgia, through its successor company, submitted inflated invoices to the Department of Defense for payment under the contract.

As a result of the investigation which led to the amicable resolution, Booth stated “ this settlement demonstrates the commitment of our office to vigorous enforcement of the False Claims Act”.

Booth praised the investigative work of lead agent Special Agent Clifford E. Currington of the Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service and Senior Auditor Keith Melville of the Defense Contract Audit Agency and the work of Assistant United States Attorneys Shannon Heath Statkus and Kenneth D. Crowder, who represented the government in this matter.

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