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**LEADER OF CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD L'AUBERGE CASINO IN
LAKE CHARLES SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT**

Defendant Ordered to Pay \$909,700 in Restitution

Lake Charles, La.: United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced that Charbel Tannous, 34, of Katy, Texas, was sentenced on September 27, 2012, to 37 months in federal prison for conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Tannous was the leader of a group who conspired to defraud L'Auberge du Lac Casino in Lake Charles, La. The sentencing was handed down by U.S. District Judge Patricia Minaldi who also ordered Tannous to serve three years supervised release and to pay \$909,700 in restitution.

According to documents filed into the Court record, Charbel Tannous, Constandi Lubbat, 55, of Houston, TX, Derrick Weldon, 44, of Lake Charles, La., and Stephen Mouton, 45, of Iowa, La., were all charged in an indictment filed June 22, 2011, with conspiracy to commit wire fraud. In addition, Tannous was charged with seven separate counts of wire fraud. Tannous was the creator of the scheme to defraud the casino. The scheme involved "rigging" roulette games by bribing Weldon and Mouton, who were dealers employed by the casino. The dealers permitted Tannous and Lubbat to place late bets at the roulette wheel. This procedure, known as "past posting," allowed Tannous and Lubbat to place chips on the number knowing it was already a winner.

Tannous also forfeited approximately \$50,000. FBI agents seized \$10,000 in cash and almost \$40,000 in cashiers checks when they arrested Tannous at the Bush International Airport, Houston, TX, when he was attempting to flee the U.S. en route to Beirut, Lebanon. There is no extradition agreement between the United States and Lebanon.

Lubbat, Weldon and Mouton have all previously pled guilty to the same charges. On September 6, 2012, Judge Minaldi sentenced Derrick Weldon to five years probation and ordered him to pay \$831,900 in restitution. Sentencing for Stephen Mouton is scheduled for October 18, 2012, and the sentencing of Constandi Lubbat is continued without date.

U.S. Attorney Finley stated, "We are very pleased with the court's decision to give this defendant a significant prison term. The casino and the citizens were victims in this case. A portion of the profits from the casino goes to the State of Louisiana and the Calcasieu Parish School Board. We will continue to partner with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners to prosecute crimes of this nature and seek the maximum amount of prison time available."

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Lake Charles Resident Agency, and the Louisiana State Police, Gaming Division, with the assistance of the Security Division of L'Auberge du Lac Casino. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James T. McManus.

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