

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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Assistant U.S. Attorney:
CHRISTOPHER J. GRAMICCIONI
973-297-2067

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Parsippany Building Inspector Admits Taking \$5,000 in Bribes

(More)

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Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

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NEWARK – A Parsippany-Troy Hills housing inspector admitted in federal court today that he accepted \$5,000 in bribes from a general contractor, who was cooperating in a corruption investigation, in exchange for the inspector's agreement not to inspect or regulate the contractor's work, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Thomas Seibel, 59, of Parsippany, pleaded guilty to a one-count criminal Information charging him with use of interstate facilities (the mail and telephone) to distribute and facilitate bribery, which carries a maximum statutory penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas, who took the guilty plea, scheduled sentencing for Oct. 3. Seibel is free on a \$25,000 unsecured bond until then.

Seibel admitted that, beginning in July 2007, he agreed to refrain from exercising his official duties as a Parsippany housing inspector on some of the cooperating witness's contracting projects in exchange for \$5,000 in corrupt payments.

Seibel admitted that, in early August 2007, he received a \$2,500 check from the cooperating witness that was sent from Pennsylvania to New Jersey via U.S. mail. Seibel said he accepted another \$2,500 cash payment in August 2007 that constituted the balance of the \$5,000 payment, during a meeting with the contractor at Seibel's home.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Irenas will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors, including acceptance of responsibility. The judge, however, has discretion and is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all of that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, for the investigation involving Seibel. Christie also credited investigators in the Special Prosecutions Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Gramiccioni of the Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense counsel: Todd M. Finchler, Esq., Parsippany