

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

More Information? Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

News on the Internet: News Releases and related documents are posted at our website, along with links to our archived releases for other years. **Go to: www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/**

Assistant U.S. Attorneys:
HOPE S. OLDS
and MARK McCARREN
973-645-2764 and 2867, respectively

feld0523.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2007

Monmouth County Truck Salesman Admits Bribes to Defraud Neptune Township

(More)

Public Affairs Office
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

Breaking News: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/publicaffairs>

NEWARK – A commercial truck salesman pleaded guilty today to scheming to make corrupt payments to the former general manager of First Vehicle Services of Neptune to influence the sale of commercial trucks to Neptune Township, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Robert Feldman, 50, of Brick Township, admitted facilitating approximately \$6,500 in corrupt payments from International Trucks of Central Jersey (ITCJ) to Richard Messer, the general manager of First Vehicle Services, which managed the purchase and maintenance of all government vehicles for Neptune Township.

Messer pleaded guilty on Nov. 16, 2006, and admitted that he took the \$6,500 in bribes from ITCJ as a reward for helping secure the sale of ITCJ trucks to Neptune Township.

As the former general manager of First Vehicle Services, Messer assisted the Neptune Township Department of Public Works with obtaining specifications for new vehicles, recommending purchases, accepting new vehicles, and ensuring that Neptune Township had received the vehicles and other equipment it had ordered.

Feldman admitted that the payments to Messer were in consideration for Messer's influence in securing the purchase of ITCJ vehicles by Neptune.

Feldman's guilty plea was before U.S. District Judge William J. Martini, who scheduled sentencing for Sept. 18. The scheme to defraud the vehicle services company of honest services (mail fraud) carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

According to an Indictment returned in July 2006, Stephen and Matthew Appolonia were part owners of ITCJ, which is based in Howell and Hillside and sells International-brand trucks and other equipment to Monmouth County and various municipalities in Monmouth and elsewhere.

Feldman admitted today that he instructed Messer, at the direction of Stephen Appolonia, to create phony landscaping invoices to conceal the true purpose of the payments to Messer. In return, Steven Appolonia allegedly endorsed multiple checks all drawn on the ITCJ account and made payable to landscaping companies affiliated with Messer.

The Appolonias and Feldman were charged in the same Indictment in July 2006. The Appolonia brothers' trial is scheduled for June 15.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's Red Bank Resident Agency, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Pedro Ruiz, and detectives from Brick Police Department, led by Brick Police Chief Ron Dougard, and the Ocean County Prosecutor's

Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Thomas Kelaher, with the investigation resulting in today's guilty plea.

Christie also credited Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark McCarren (Chief, Public Protection Unit) and Hope Olds, who are prosecuting the case.

-end-

Defense Counsel:

Michael P. Koribanics, Esq., Koribanics & Koribanics