

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2007

Linden Building Inspector Admits Taking
Corrupt Cash Payments from Company

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Linden building inspector pleaded guilty today to accepting \$10,500 in cash payments from a cooperating construction company in exchange for his agreement to exercise his official influence to assist the construction company in obtaining building permits from the City of Linden, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Matthew P. Valvano, 49, of Linden, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Joseph E. Irenas to one-count Information, which charges him with accepting corrupt payments. Judge Irenas continued the defendant's release on \$50,000 bond and scheduled sentencing for Feb. 29.

At his plea hearing, Valvano admitted that between March 2007 and August 2007, he accepted corrupt cash payments totaling \$10,500 from a Georgia-based construction company's employees who were cooperating with the FBI. Valvano admitted that he accepted the corrupt payments in exchange for agreeing to aid the construction company with the permitting process in connection with renovations on a commercial building in Linden.

Valvano also acknowledged that his responsibilities as a building inspector included inspecting newly constructed and renovated commercial buildings in order to determine if the work performed on the buildings had been completed in accordance with applicable building codes, and making decisions regarding the issuance of permits.

The bribery charge to which Valvano pleaded guilty carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

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. The judge, however, 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 that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, in Newark, with the investigation leading to Valvano's guilty plea.

The case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey S. Chiesa of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Counsel: Joseph Hayden, Esq. and Michael D'Alessio, Esq., Roseland