



Department of Justice

Office of the United States Attorney Western District of Wisconsin

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MAN SENTENCED FOR BANK FRAUD

Madison, Wis. - Stephen P. Sinnott, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Julio Benitez Zamorano, 24, a citizen of Mexico, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to eight months in prison for bank fraud. Zamorano pleaded guilty to this charge on August 19, 2009.

On March 16, 2009, a group of individuals, including Zamorano and co-defendant Virginia Castillo, entered the First National Bank of River Falls, River Falls, Wis. The individuals approached tellers and presented fraudulent (stolen) checks drawn on the account of St. Croix Custom Fabrication, Inc. The checks cashed by Castillo and Zamorano were made payable to "Ismael Vazquez" and "Rebeca Silva" and they provided false identification in those names. Prior to cashing the checks, the bank teller required Castillo and Zamorano to place their fingerprints on the checks.

Zamorano and co-defendant Castillo were subsequently arrested in Albert Lea, Minn., on March 23, 2009, after they tried to cash more stolen checks at a local bank. Zamorano and Castillo were fingerprinted after their arrests and their fingerprints matched the fingerprints on the checks that were cashed at the First National Bank of River Falls.

Co-defendant Castillo received a four-month sentence last week, which reflected her extensive cooperation with the investigation. Three other individuals - Lesuin Joel Garcia, Oscar Leonel Rodriguez, and Jose Herman Jiminez Betancourt - were charged in a separate indictment and their trial is scheduled for February 22, 2010.

The charges against Zamorano were the result of an investigation conducted by the River Falls Police Department, New Richmond Police Department, Chippewa Falls Police Department, St. Croix County Sheriff's Department, Albert Lea Police Department, and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rita M. Rumbelow.

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