



Press Releases

FEDERAL GRAND JURY BRINGS TAX CHARGES AGAINST FORMER ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCILMAN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Federal Grand Jury sitting in the Eastern District of Louisiana returned a second superseding indictment against **JOSEPH ANTHONY IMPASTATO**, a former St. Tammany Parish Councilman, announced U. S. Attorney Jim Letten today. A superseding indictment is a legal mechanism used by the Grand Jury to bring related new charges against a defendant.

Today's superseding indictment charges **IMPASTATO** with making false statements to the Internal Revenue Service on his 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 tax returns. The Grand Jury charged **IMPASTATO** with failing to disclose at least \$90,000 cash taken from a business run by **IMPASTATO** over the four year period. Each of the new charges carries a statutory maximum of three (3) years incarceration, a \$100,000 fine, restitution and three (3) years of supervised release.

IMPASTATO had previously been charged by the Grand Jury in two prior indictments, one in December, 2005 and the other in August, 2006. The December, 2005 indictment charged that **IMPASTATO** engaged in a conspiracy to interfere with commerce by extortion (commonly known as the Hobbs Act). It also charged **IMPASTATO** with interfering with commerce by extortion, and with conducting and attempting to conduct money laundering. The indictment alleges that **IMPASTATO** used his official position as a councilman to obtain inside information about the debris removal contract resulting from Hurricane Katrina, and also used his official position to influence Omni Pinnacle, a prime contractor of St. Tammany Parish, to enter into a contract with the victim, Pontchartrain Chipping Yard. According to the allegations, **IMPASTATO**, who was councilman for the owners of Pontchartrain Chipping Yard, allegedly pressured the owners to pay him 50% of the funds Pontchartrain received from Omni Pinnacle. The December 2005 indictment further alleges that when the victims were hesitant to accede to **IMPASTATO**'s demands, he used fear of economic harm, including inducing the owners to believe that he was making Omni Pinnacle withhold monies due for prior debris removal. It is also alleged that **IMPASTATO** influenced and directed Pontchartrain Chipping Yard to make payments to **IMPASTATO** through another individual, when in reality, the money was intended for **IMPASTATO**.

The superseding indictment returned on August 11, 2006 brought additional charges concerning **IMPASTATO**'s attempted extortion in 2005 of another St. Tammany Parish land owner after Hurricane Katrina devastated St. Tammany Parish. According to the allegations in the superseding indictment, this land owner, like Pontchartrain Chipping Yard, had a large parcel of rural land well suited for debris dumping. **IMPASTATO** attempted to obtain 50% of an expected debris dumping contract with the St. Tammany Parish land owner, and allegedly made it clear that if the land owner did not kick back 50% of the total value of the contract to **IMPASTATO**, he (**IMPASTATO**) would not assist in obtaining the dumping contract for the land owner with the government contractor.

The first superseding indictment also charged **IMPASTATO** with soliciting and attempting to receive illegal gratuities, namely a 50% kickback from Pontchartrain Chipping Yard and the other St. Tammany Parish land owner which is prohibited by federal law as long as the state entities receive more than \$10,000.00 a year from the federal government. The indictment alleged the