



Department of Justice

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DAWSONVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR TAX FRAUD

Merickle Skimmed Over A Half-Million Dollars From His Company Tax-Free

Gainesville, GA - ROBERT MERICKLE, 59, of Dawsonville, Georgia was sentenced today in federal court on a charge of filing a false tax return in 2001, which failed to report substantial amounts of income from a company he owned and operated, "East Coast Marketing," d/b/a "Blue Haven Pools."

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said: "As we approach tax filing season, we see what can happen when an individual or a company tries to avoid following the same rules that everyone must follow. In this case, the defendant enriched himself at all other taxpayers' expense. No one enjoys paying taxes, but evading the obligation to report and pay taxes on income hurts everyone. Those who choose this course of action face the possibility of federal prison time, which is far worse than paying the tax that is owed."

IRS-Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge Rebecca Sparkman said, "The diversion of company funds for the personal use of the company owners is a felony, and those who choose to conduct this type of fraud face prison time. In the midst of tax filing season, let's today's sentencing send the message that taxpayers thinking about cheating on their taxes should think twice or suffer the consequences."

MERICKLE was sentenced to 12 months, one day in federal prison, to be followed by one year of supervised release, and ordered to cooperate with the IRS in determining an amount of restitution. He pleaded guilty to the charges in a Criminal Information on December 20, 2007.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the Criminal Information and other information presented in court: In 2001, MERICKLE spent over \$200,000 out of his company's account for personal expenses, including the financing of a 55' luxury yacht, but treated those expenses as business expenses. He also accepted tens of thousands of

dollars in cash from customers, which he kept off of the company's books and therefore off of its tax returns. MERICKLE engaged in similar conduct in 2000, 2002 and 2003, which along with 2001, amounted to combine for over \$500,000 in unreported income.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Justin S. Anand prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.