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**“EXPEDITER” WHO COOPERATED IN FEDERAL CORRUPTION PROBE
OF CITY BUILDING PERMITS SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS PROBATION**

CHICAGO — A former Chicago woman who provided extraordinary cooperation in *Operation Crooked Code*, a federal public corruption investigation of the City of Chicago building permit process, avoided prison and was sentenced today to three years of probation. The defendant, **Catherine Romasanta**, testified in four federal trials about how she paid bribes to city inspectors on behalf of contractors, developers and property owners to expedite the permit process. Romasanta, 61, formerly of Chicago, has admitted paying bribes totaling more than \$187,000 to approximately 25 to 30 city inspectors on behalf of approximately 20 to 25 developers and others in the city.

Romasanta was an “expediter,” a businessperson who takes permit applications and other construction issues to the city on behalf of homeowners and developers. Between 2001 and May 2007, she paid bribes to city officials for a variety of actions, non-actions, favorable reports, or to facilitate a quicker-than-normal inspection or review. After she was confronted by federal law enforcement, she began cooperating and recording conversations, which resulted in additional prosecutions in which she testified. So far, 21 defendants, including 15 current or former city employees, have been convicted as part of the corruption investigation.

Romasanta pleaded guilty to federal bribery in April 2009. Senior U.S. District Judge Milton Shadur imposed the sentence of probation following at a hearing this afternoon in Federal Court.

The sentence was announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Thomas P. Brady, Postal Inspector-in-Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Chicago; Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Joseph Ferguson, Inspector General for the City of Chicago.

“In collaboration with our federal law enforcement partners, the IGO will continue to be vigilant in working to put an end to corruption in and subversion of the City’s inspections process,” Mr. Ferguson said.

Anyone with information about alleged corruption in the city permit process is encouraged to contact the City Inspector General’s Office either through their hotline – (866) 448-4754, or through their web site at www.chicagoinspectorgeneral.org

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christopher Hotaling and April Perry.

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