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Stephanie A. Finley
United States Attorney
(337) 262-6618
mona.hardwick@usdoj.gov

**MONROE CITY COUNCILMEN CONVICTED
OF RACKETEERING AND EXTORTION**

Defendants Took Bribes in Connection with Matters Before the Council

Monroe, LA: Two members of the Monroe, La. City Council were convicted after a 10-day trial on charges of racketeering and extortion for taking bribes from individuals and organizations with business before the council, United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today. Robert E. "Red" Stevens, 58, and Arthur Gilmore, Jr., 52, were convicted of two counts of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c), and the Hobbs Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1951.

Trial testimony revealed that Stevens and Gilmore, both of whom were elected to their positions in 1996, used their offices and positions as elected city councilmen to enrich themselves by accepting cash and other things of value from individuals and organizations having business before the council. In exchange, Stevens and Gilmore took actions favorable to these individuals and organizations. These activities occurred from 2006 to the end of 2009.

There were nine specific instances where Stevens and Gilmore violated the Louisiana public bribery law by accepting money and other things of value from a local businessman

who was cooperating with the investigation. In total, Stevens accepted bribes of \$6,300.00, while Gilmore accepted bribes of \$1,437.00 along with other valuable consideration, including a reduced purchase price for land.

Both men face a maximum sentence on Count 1, RICO, of 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. The Hobbs Act is punishable by a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Sentencing is set for August 15, 2011.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Monroe Resident Agency, and the Louisiana State Police. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney C. Mignonne Griffing.

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