



**United States Department of Justice  
United States Attorney's Office  
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,  
United States Attorney**

**Jeanne F. Cooney  
Director of Community Relations  
(612) 664-5611  
email: [jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov](mailto:jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov)**

# **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, April 21, 2011  
[WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN](http://WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN)

## **Cellular telephone company account executive sentenced for selling phones on the side**

Earlier today in federal court in Minneapolis, a former account executive with Sprint Nextel was sentenced for defrauding the company out of nearly \$145,000 by acquiring phones and selling them to unwitting third parties through e-Bay. United States District Court Judge Patrick J. Schiltz sentenced Christopher Keith Destasio, age 43, of Minneapolis, to 12 months and one day in prison on one count of wire fraud in connection to this crime. Destasio was charged on August 2, 2010, and pleaded guilty on September 17, 2010.

In his plea agreement, Destasio admitted that from October of 2007 through October of 2009, he defrauded Sprint Nextel by ordering hundreds of Sprint phones purportedly for his customers but keeping them for himself. To account for the phones, he billed his customers' accounts. However, because he billed only a negligible amount for each phone, usually just 99 cents, most customers failed to notice the charges on their Sprint Nextel bills.

The phones Destasio ordered are known as "cold phones," meaning they did not yet have phone numbers assigned to them. As a result, once the phones were delivered to his home, he easily was able to sell them on e-Bay. During the two-year period of this fraud scheme, Destasio sold 575 phones for prices ranging from \$200 to \$409. In all, he fraudulently acquired approximately \$144,657.28. Specific to the charge of wire fraud, Destasio instructed an e-Bay customer to wire transfer \$409 to his Paypal account on August 10, 2009, following that customer's purchase of a Sprint Blackberry.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force and the Edina Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David J. MacLaughlin.

The Financial Crimes Task Force was established pursuant to state law. It is comprised of

local, state and federal law enforcement investigators, who work to combat the growing trend of cross-jurisdictional financial crimes. The task force is overseen by an advisory board, also created under state law.

###