

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 23, 2008

FAA Contractor Sentenced to 48 Months
For Bribing FAA Official

(More)

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TRENTON – A Federal Aviation Administration contractor, who also is a former employee of the FAA's William J. Hughes Technical Center in Atlantic County, was sentenced today to 48 months in federal prison for paying bribes to another former FAA employee, Acting United States Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

U.S. District Chief Judge Garrett E. Brown, Jr., also ordered Maria Lianidis, 45, of Linwood, to pay a fine of \$75,000 and to serve three years of supervised release. Judge Brown continued the defendant's release on a \$200,000 bond pending her surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on a date to be determined by prison authorities.

On Feb. 6, 2008, Lianidis, who was president of Digital Management Systems, Inc. (DMS), a computer engineering company based in Absecon, pleaded guilty before Judge Brown to three counts of bribery.

At her plea hearing, Lianidis admitted that she paid cash bribes to Darrell Woods, 50, of Winslow Township, who was at the time an FAA program manager. Woods' responsibilities included participating in the creation of FAA contract solicitations and overseeing the performance of DMS on government contracts that the company obtained with Woods' assistance. In making the corrupt payments, Lianidis admitted that she sought to influence Woods in the performance of his official duties as an FAA employee.

Lianidis admitted that on three separate instances in early 2003, she gave Woods a total of approximately \$23,000 in cash, as described in an Indictment that was returned against her in August 2007. Lianidis did not dispute that the amount of money given to Woods was substantially greater than \$23,000.

Woods pleaded guilty on June 13, 2007, to one count of wire fraud and one count of money laundering related to the bribery and contract-steering scheme, admitting that he had received in excess of \$150,000 from Lianidis. Woods is free on a \$250,000 bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for January 5, 2009.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Brown consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, including all conduct relevant to the commission of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Marra credited Special Agents of the Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent In Charge Ned Schwartz in New York, and the IRS Criminal Investigations Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord, with the investigation that resulted in the guilty pleas of Lianidis and Woods.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David A. Bocian and Hope S. Olds of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Attorneys:

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