

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ocean County Man Admits Committing Series of Bank Robberies

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TRENTON – A Brick man pleaded guilty today to committing a series of six bank robberies on consecutive Thursdays in Ocean, Middlesex and Monmouth counties, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

Peter A. Bielecke, 41, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joel A. Pisano, to one count of bank robbery. Judge Pisano continued the defendant's detention and scheduled sentencing for Aug. 25. Bielecke has been held in either state or federal custody since his arrest on March 5, 2009.

At his plea hearing, Bielecke admitted that he used force and intimidation in committing the following robberies:

- Jan. 29, 2009, Provident Bank in Brick, of approximately \$1,851;
- Feb. 5, 2009, Investors Savings Bank in Brick, of approximately \$1,385;
- Feb. 12, 2009, Sovereign Bank in Toms River, of approximately \$1,435;
- Feb. 19, 2009, Investors Savings Bank in Lakewood, of approximately \$1,323;
- Feb. 27, 2009, Garden State Community Bank in Howell, of approximately \$2,881;
- March 5, 2009, Synergy Bank in Old Bridge, of approximately \$3,000.

On March 12, a federal grand jury returned an Indictment charging Bielecke with six counts of bank robbery. While Bielecke pleaded guilty to only one count of bank robbery (related to the Jan. 29 robbery), all of the conduct he admitted today – the so-called “relevant conduct” – will be considered and taken into account by Judge Pisano at sentencing.

Bielecke's arrest was the result of a multi-jurisdictional investigation into bank robberies that were committed on consecutive Thursdays in January and February.

The charge of bank robbery carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Pisano will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics 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.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI's Red Bank Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark; Investigators with the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction Prosecutor Marlene Lynch Ford; Investigators with the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin; and Police Officers with the police departments of Brick, Toms River, Lakewood, Howell, Old Bridge, Wall, Berkeley Township, Jackson, Manchester, Point Pleasant, and the Ocean County Sheriff's Office, for the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Harvey Bartle of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorney: Lisa Van Hoeck, Esq. Assistant Federal Public Defender