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LOCAL BUSINESSMAN, CPA IS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR FEDERAL CRIMINAL TAX VIOLATION

Tannehill to Serve 24 Months for Failing to Remit Withholding Taxes

SHREVEPORT, La.: GEORGE M. TANNEHILL was sentenced to 24 months in a federal prison, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington and IRS Special Agent in Charge Michael J. DePalma announced today. Tannehill, 54, of Lafayette, La., plead guilty last March to one count of Willful Failure to Pay Over Tax. Wednesday's sentence was imposed by United States Judge Tom Stagg. Tannehill was also ordered to pay \$153,108.00 in restitution.

Tannehill, a 50% owner of Fertitta's All Weather Heating and Air Conditioning, operated the business along with a partner from January 2001 to September 2003. A former licensed certified public accountant, Tannehill handled all of the finances of Fertitta's, including payroll obligations. The employees were provided pay stubs which indicated that taxes were withheld. Between July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2003, Tannehill failed to pay all of Fertitta's employment taxes totaling \$342,085.

An indictment was returned by a federal Grand Jury September 24, 2008, charging Tannehill with six counts of failing to pay over federal income taxes and Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes to the Internal Revenue Service.

U.S. Attorney Washington stated: "Tannehill lied to and victimized hard-working employees by stealing the portion of their wages which was intended to be deposited into their Social Security and Medicare accounts. Tannehill's greed has clearly earned him a

federal prison sentence. This office will continue to vigorously prosecute those who violate federal law all in the name of greed.”

Michael J. De Palma, Special Agent in Charge of Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, stated: "The sentence today sends a strong message to persons who willfully fail to pay employment taxes. The consequences of employment tax fraud affects more than the loss of tax revenue. The real victims are the employees whose future social security or Medicare benefits have been affected by the failure to pay the employment taxes.”

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, Shreveport Office, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney C. Mignonne Griffing.

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