



Department of Justice

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DAWSONVILLE MAN CHARGED WITH TAX FRAUD

Merickle Skimmed Over A Half-Million Dollars From His Company Tax-Free

Gainesville, GA - A criminal information was filed today in federal district court against ROBERT MERICKLE, 59, of Dawsonville, Georgia. The information charges that ROBERT MERICKLE filed a false tax return in 2001, which failed to report substantial amounts of income from a company he owned and operated, East Coast Marketing, d/b/a Blue Haven Pools.

United States Attorney Nahmias said: "This businessman tried to avoid following the rules that everyone must follow, and enriched himself at all other taxpayers' expense. No one enjoys paying taxes, but evading the obligation to honestly report and pay income taxes harms everyone. Those who choose this criminal course of action face federal prison time, which is far worse than paying the tax that was owed."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the Criminal Information and other information presented in court: In 2001, MERICKLE spent over \$200,000 from his company's account for personal expenses, including the financing of a 55-foot luxury yacht, but treated those expenses as business expenses. He also accepted tens of thousands of dollars in cash from customers, which he kept off the company's books and therefore off its tax returns. Although not charged in the information, the Government alleges that MERICKLE engaged in similar conduct in 2000, 2002 and 2003, which combine for over \$500,000 in unreported income. MERICKLE has agreed that the 2000, 2002 and 2003 conduct and unreported income will be used to determine his sentence, but disputes the exact amount of the unreported income in those years.

The charges carry a maximum sentence of three years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

MERICKLE pleaded guilty today to the charges contained in the information before U.S. Magistrate Judge Susan Cole, who will issue a report and recommendation to

U.S. District Court Judge William O'Kelley to consider the plea. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Justin S. Anand is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.