

## News Release

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CONTACT: JEAN McNEIL  
Public Information Officer  
(208) 334-1211

### **BIG BUCKS BINGO OPERATORS CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD THE IRS**

William J. Tway and Robert J. Ford were convicted today in federal court of conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service in relation to their operation of Big Bucks Bingo in Garden City, Idaho. Ford and Tway ran Big Bucks Bingo starting in 1996 under a provision in the state constitution that permits bingo and raffle games operated by qualified charitable organizations. A related state law requires that at least 20 percent of the annual gross revenues of the games must be given to charitable or nonprofit organizations to be used for charitable purposes.

On returns filed with the IRS, Ford and Tway substantially overstated the amount of monies that they claimed had been given to charity. Tway was also convicted of filing false returns in 1999 and 2000 for Free Speech Foundation. This foundation was one of the charitable or non-profit entities that operated Big Bucks Bingo.

The maximum penalty for a conviction of conspiracy is five years and filing false tax returns is three years. Both convictions carry a maximum fine of \$250,000.

Sentencing has not yet been scheduled.

U.S. Attorney Tom Moss credited the IRS with a "skillful and thorough investigation that made the prosecution possible."