

News Release

U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Ohio*

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William J. Edwards, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, announced today that a federal grand jury in Cleveland, Ohio, returned an indictment charging four individuals with fraudulently receiving per diem expenses of approximately \$347,664.93 under their employment contracts with MOTA Corporation, a prime contractor of NASA in connection with the decommissioning of a nuclear reactor located at the NASA Plum Brook Facility in Sandusky, Ohio.

Charged in the Indictment are Eric Johannsen and Eric Bertrand of Oak Harbor, Ohio, Joseph Sorg of Sandusky, Ohio, and David Eckman, formerly of Oak Harbor, Ohio.

The indictment charges that Eric Johannsen (who was the Project Manager), along with Joseph Sorg, Eric Bertrand and David Eckman each falsely listed permanent addresses more than 50 miles from NASA Plum Brook in order to receive per diem payments of between \$65.00 and \$75.00 per day, when, in fact, each defendant had established and maintained a permanent residence less than 50 miles from the NASA Plum Brook Facility. As a result, the Indictment charges that between May 2003 and April 2008, the defendants embezzled, stole and purloined funds belonging to the United States, or any department of agency thereof, in the following respective amounts:

Eric Johannsen - \$88,372.19

Joseph Sorg - \$51,183.03

Eric Bertrand - \$117,719.86

David Eckman - \$90,389.85

If convicted, the defendants' sentences will be determined by the Court after review of factors unique to this case, including the defendants' prior criminal record, if any, the

defendants' roles in the offense, and the characteristics of the violation. In all cases the sentences will not exceed the statutory maximum and, in most cases, it will be less than the maximum.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert W. Kern of the Cleveland U.S. Attorney's Office, following an investigation by the NASA Office of Inspector General located at the Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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