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GARRETT WILSON PLEADS GUILTY TO DEFRAUDING BOSSIER PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

Shreveport, Louisiana: Garrett Gene Wilson, 37, of Bossier City, La., part-owner of Ark-La-Tex Air Repair, Inc., and one of five defendants indicted last month for defrauding the Bossier Parish School Board in connection with the purchase and maintenance of air conditioning systems, has pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced today. The guilty plea was entered before United States District Judge Maurice Hicks. Sentencing is set for May 20, 2009.

Co-defendant Alan Victor Lee pleaded guilty on January 14, 2009, to one count of mail fraud, and Ark-La-Tex Air Repair, Inc. pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud. Lee will be sentenced May 14, 2009. The corporation itself was named in last month's indictment and the corporation's guilty plea will facilitate the forfeiture of corporate assets that are proceeds of the crime.

Ark-La-Tex Repair, Inc. received approximately \$8.6 million worth of air conditioning contracts from the School Board between 2004 and 2008. During this same time, Wilson admitted that he and the company charged the Board for more expensive equipment than was actually installed, charged for

equipment that was never installed at all, and charged for replacing air conditioning units that were functioning properly. Garrett also admitted that his co-defendants who were School Board employees were allowed to swipe their maintenance department credit cards at Air Repair to receive cash, with bogus invoices subsequently generated to cover up the fraud. As a result of the scheme charged in the indictment, the School Board was defrauded in excess of \$780,000.

Garrett faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

A six-month investigation by the FBI code-named "Screaming Eagle" led to the indictment which remains pending against the three co-defendants.

This investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Shreveport Resident Agency, with the assistance of the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Alexander C. Van Hook and Robin S. McCoy.

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