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PRESS RELEASE

FORMER FIRE COMPANY TREASURER ADMITS EMBEZZLEMENT

STOLEN FUNDS ALLEGED TO TOTAL OVER \$350,000

United States Attorney Colm F. Connolly announced that Harry V. McMullen, 41, the former treasurer of the Cranston Heights Fire Company in Wilmington, Delaware, pleaded guilty today in federal court in Wilmington, Delaware to wire fraud after admitting that he had embezzled money from the fire company.

In pleading guilty, McMullen, who held the position of treasurer of the fire company from December 2001 until February 2005, admitted that between October 2003, and January 2005, he stole money from the company by taking numerous cash withdrawals from two of the company's bank accounts using ATM cards that he had obtained without the approval of the fire company's officers or board of directors. McMullen admitted that he did not redeposit the money into any of the company's bank accounts or use the money for the company's benefit. McMullen was able to hide the theft because, as treasurer, he exercised sole management and control over the fire company's accounts. The fire company only learned that there was a problem when a bank official called to inform them that their operating account, the account the fire company used to pay its mortgage and the majority of its bills, was overdrawn. Although in pleading guilty the defendant did not admit to a specific loss amount, the Government alleges that the fraudulent cash withdrawals total over \$288,000 and that, further, the defendant wrote unauthorized checks to himself totaling over \$64,000 from the fire company's accounts.

U.S. Attorney Connolly said of the case: "In Delaware, citizens support their local volunteer fire companies by donating funds, and, in return, they rightfully expect the money to be used in support of the company that protects their families and their homes. Thus, when an officer of a fire company steals company funds to line

his own pockets, he abuses not only the trust of his fellow firefighters, but the trust of the public as well because, in Delaware, a fire company is as much a public entity as any government agency. ”

The case was investigated by Detective Christian Brown of the Delaware State Police. Special agents of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, assisted in the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Beth Moskow-Schnoll is prosecuting the case.

McMullen faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and payment of restitution.

For additional information, please contact Theresa Jordan at 302-573-6277, ext. 117.

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