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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**RESTAURANT OWNER SENTENCED TO 18 MONTHS FOR TAX VIOLATIONS**

**AUGUSTA, GA:** Edmund A. Booth, Jr., Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced that, on July 10, 2007, Emilio Sanchez, owner of Vera Cruz Mexican Restaurants in Augusta, was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment on his counts of conviction by U.S. District Judge Dudley H. Bowen, Jr. in U.S. District Court in Augusta.. The Court also ordered that Sanchez be placed on supervised release for a term of one year, and to pay a fine of \$10,000. The 18 month sentence handed down by Judge Bowen was at the upper end of Sanchez's sentencing guideline range

Booth noted that previously, on March 12, 2007, Sanchez pled guilty to three counts of filing false tax returns in violation of Title 26 United States Code Section 7206(1). Additionally, Sanchez agreed to forfeit in excess of one million dollars, a portion of which has been used to pay back taxes and fines, and the remainder of which is to be shared between local and federal law enforcement agencies for law enforcement purposes.

At the Rule 11 hearing held in March, the evidence established that in December 2004, Vera Cruz Mexican Restaurant on Stevens Creek Road was burglarized and a safe was taken. The safe contained just over \$400,000 of the \$1,000,000 that was ultimately seized. The burglary investigation led officers to secure search warrants, which turned up the remaining \$600,000. During the Rule 11

hearing, agents testified about the seized cash and that Sanchez had under-reported his taxable income for the years 2001, 2002, and 2003 by more than \$460,000.

The investigation was conducted by the Richmond County Sheriff's Office, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service. The Government was represented by Patricia Green Johnson, and James L. Coursey, Jr., Assistant United States Attorneys for the Southern District of Georgia.

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