



PRESS RELEASE

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**RIO RANCHO BUSINESSMAN RECEIVES TWENTY-SIX MONTH
PRISON SENTENCE FOR FEDERAL BANK FRAUD CONVICTION**

ALBUQUERQUE – This afternoon a federal judge in Albuquerque sentenced **Richard B. Wickens**, 44, of Rio Rancho, N.M., to a 26-month term of imprisonment to be followed by three years of supervised release for his bank fraud conviction. Wickens also is required to pay \$1,245,536.50 in restitution to the Bank of Albuquerque (Bank), the victim of his fraudulent conduct. Wickens was ordered to surrender to a federal correctional institution to be designated by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons within 60 days to begin serving his sentence.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Wickens was indicted on January 12, 2011, and charged with four counts of bank fraud and three counts of making false statements in connection with a credit or loan application. According to the indictment, between July and December 2006, Wickens engaged in a scheme to defraud the Bank in order to shore up his failing Albuquerque-based business, Real Turf and Putting Greens, Inc. (RTPG). It generally alleged that Wickens made false statements about RTPG's financial standing in connection with his application for a line of credit with the Bank; that the Bank relied on the false statements and provided Wickens with a line of credit in the amount of \$1.3 million dollars; and that Wickens drew down on the line of credit and did not repay the funds.

On November 8, 2011, Wickens plead guilty to Count 1 of the Indictment, a bank fraud charge, under a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office. In entering his guilty plea, Wickens admitted that he was the president and owner of RTPG, a company that was in the business of installing artificial turf at schools, athletic fields and private residences. Wickens further admitted that, by mid-2006, RTPG was in financial trouble and needed capital to continue its operations. To obtain additional capital for RTPG, Wickens approached the Bank to discuss the prospect of obtaining a line of credit, and provided information, including financial statements, to the Bank that substantially and materially misrepresented RTPG's financial condition. Wickens acknowledged that the information he provided to the Bank falsely represented that RTPG was showing a profit when in reality RTPG was operating at a substantial loss. Based on Wickens' false statements, the Bank extended to RTPG a line of credit in the

amount of approximately \$1.3 million. Wickens admitted that he drew down the money available through the line of credit, spent the money, and did not repay the Bank.

Counts 2 through 7 of the Indictment were dismissed after Wickens was sentenced as required by the plea agreement.

The case was investigated by the FBI, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John C. Anderson.

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