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**FORMER PROVISO EMPLOYEE INDICTED IN
\$50,000 FRAUD INVOLVING SENIOR CITIZENS PROGRAM**

CHICAGO -- A former Proviso Township employee was arrested today after he was indicted for allegedly fraudulently obtaining more than \$50,000 from a township fund intended to benefit senior citizens between 1996 and 1999. The defendant, **Joseph Cimino**, who was the township's director of Senior Citizen Services, was charged with mail fraud in a three-count indictment returned late yesterday by a federal grand jury, Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, announced today.

Cimino, 55, of 1530 North 18th, Melrose Park, was expected to appear later today in U.S. District Court.

According to the indictment, Cimino was responsible for administering Proviso Township's programs that provided services to senior citizens, including what was known as the "Handy-Man Program." That program provided seniors with free labor for minor home maintenance and repair projects. The township received contributions from government bodies, individuals and businesses to defray expenses associated with the Handy-Man and other senior citizen services. Cimino had authority over a checking account at First Suburban National Bank in the name of "Proviso Township Handyman Service" without the knowledge or approval of Proviso Township Trustees. Between 1996 and March 1999, Cimino allegedly engaged in a fraud scheme by illegally writing checks to himself from that account and retaining the proceeds for his personal use. The indictment

alleges that he fraudulently obtained approximately \$52,750, and concealed the scheme from the Proviso Township Board of Trustees and other officials.

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the charges with Thomas J. Kneir, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and, together, they thanked Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, whose office assisted in the investigation. The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kaarina Salovaara.

If convicted, Cimino faces a maximum penalty of fifteen years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and mandatory restitution. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the United States has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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