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June 16, 2010

FORMER SALES MANAGER FOR OREGON COMPANY PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL FRAUD

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and ROBERT D. GRANT, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, today made the following announcement:

THOMAS G. ACKERMAN, 61, of Scottsdale, Arizona, pled guilty today in federal court in Rockford to one count of interstate carrier fraud. Ackerman formerly worked as a sales and marketing manager for Woods Equipment Company ("Woods") of Oregon, Illinois. The interstate carrier fraud charge against Ackerman stemmed from his scheme to defraud Woods in connection with travel expense reimbursements.

In pleading guilty today, Ackerman admitted that he defrauded Woods by submitting false claims for business travel reimbursement. Woods reimbursed Ackerman and its salesmen for their business travel expenses. For purposes of this reimbursement, Woods required its salesmen to submit travel expense reports and receipts for expenses over \$25.

In the plea agreement that was filed with the court today, Ackerman admitted that from June of 2001 through November of 2006, he submitted fraudulent travel expense reports which falsely listed expenses for airline flights which he did not purchase or take. Ackerman also admitted that he created false itineraries listing the prices for the flights to support his fictitious travel. According to the plea agreement, Ackerman sent the false travel expense reports and airline itineraries to Woods, via commercial interstate carrier, in order to cause Woods to issue travel reimbursement checks to him.

The interstate carrier fraud charge to which Ackerman plead guilty carries a maximum potential sentence of up to 20 years in prison without parole, and a fine of up to \$250,000, as well as any restitution ordered by the court. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines. United States District Judge Philip G. Reinhard has set Ackerman's sentencing hearing for September 16, 2010, at 9:00 a.m.

The case was investigated by the Rockford Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Scott A. Verseman.

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