



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of West Virginia

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## **FORMER BECKLEY BUSINESS OWNER PLEADS GUILTY TO ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATION**

### *Admits to Storing Hazardous Waste in Open Containers*

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A Beckley, West Virginia man pleaded guilty today for his role in illegally storing hazardous waste. Christopher Shawn Mills, 36, admitted he was involved with chrome plating at Mills Plating shop located on Robert C. Byrd Drive in Beckley from 2004 through 2006. According to court documents, Mills and his business partner, Rodney T. Hoffman, 43, also of Beckley, cleaned out plating tanks and stored the waste material on site without a permit. Both men admitted they were aware the waste material was hazardous when storing it in open containers and vats at the Robert C. Byrd Drive location from October 2006 to February 2007, when it was discovered by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. Subsequently, the U.S. Environmental Protection agency conducted a cleanup of the site. Mills faces up to five years in prison and a \$50,000 fine per day of violation when he is sentenced on September 22, 2010. Hoffman previously pleaded guilty in April 2010 for his role in the offense. He is scheduled to be sentenced on August 18, 2010.

“Hazardous wastes must be properly stored to ensure that the public and the environment are protected,” said David M. Dillon, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Criminal Investigation Division Regional Office. United States Attorney R. Booth Goodwin II stated, “We will prosecute those who break the law by taking short cuts which endanger our environment and our community.”

The investigation was conducted by EPA, with assistance from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. The prosecutions are being handled by Special Assistant United States Attorney Perry McDaniel and Assistant United States Attorney Erik S. Goes. United States District Judge Irene C. Berger is presiding over the proceedings.

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