



Department of Justice

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Former Central Kentucky Businessman Sentenced to 36 Months for The Illegal Transportation and Storage of Hazardous Waste

LEXINGTON, Ky. – A former Central Kentucky businessman, who currently resides in Austin, Texas, was sentenced in U.S. District Court today. Kenneth Gravitt, 63, was sentenced, to 36 months, by Chief U.S. District Judge Karen Caldwell, on convictions relating to the illegal storage, transportation and disposal of hazardous waste.

In May of this year, Gravitt pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit crimes related to the handling of hazardous waste and one count of illegal storage of hazardous waste. The hazardous waste in this case consisted of old television and computer monitors that contained Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs), which have large amounts of toxic lead. For a number of years, Gravitt operated Global Environmental Services (GES), in Georgetown, Kentucky, which was in the business of recycling electronic waste. The facts established that beginning around 2013, GES contracted with various businesses and entities to collect and recycle large numbers of devices containing CRTs. Over time, as GES took in far more of these electronic devices than it could process, it began to send crushed CRTs for disposal, to a Central Kentucky landfill that did not have a license to handle such materials. On a separate occasion in October 2015, GES illegally buried large quantities of CRT bearing devices behind its Georgetown facility. Investigators also found large numbers of CRTs in GES managed warehouses in Cynthiana and Winchester. The estimated costs to clean all the sites was several million dollars.

“The illegal disposal of hazardous waste endangers us all,” said Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky. “We have these prohibitions for a reason: they protect the environment, public health, public funds, and the safety of people in our community. When people endanger the community merely to serve their own interests, that conduct simply has to be prosecuted.”

"The defendant in this case put human health and the environment at risk by improperly storing and disposing of hazardous wastes," said Special Agent in Charge Andy Castro of EPA's criminal enforcement program in Kentucky. "This case shows that companies and their top executives who knowingly violate hazardous waste laws will be prosecuted."

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Andy Castro, Special Agent in Charge, Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Enforcement

Program for Kentucky; and Jon Maybriar, Director, Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Waste Management, jointly made the announcement. The investigation was conducted by the Office of Inspector General of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Waste Management. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Ken Taylor and Erin Roth.

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