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Press Release

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Men Sentenced in Federal Court for Role in Arson for Profit Schemes

James L. Santelle, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, announced that on July 15, 2013, Mathew Lemberger (age: 33) was sentenced to 120 months imprisonment by United States District Judge William C. Griesbach. Lemberger had previously pled guilty to two counts of arson of a building. According to the plea agreement and other documents filed in court, Lemberger admitted collaborating with Thomas Wank (age: 55), James Kannenberg (age: 65) and Adam Jaehnig (age: 36) to intentionally burn his business property in December 2010 for purposes of later collecting insurance proceeds for the loss. Lemberger also admitted that he and Kannenberg also burned Lemberger's residence in March 2009 to collect the insurance proceeds.

Judge Griesbach previously sentenced Wank on April 22, 2013, and Kannenberg on May 14, 2013 to 36 month terms of imprisonment following their guilty plea to the December 2010 arson to the building containing Lemberger's business equipment. Jaehnig was sentenced on June 24, 2013 to 12 month's imprisonment based on his guilty plea to making a false statement to law enforcement in connection to that arson.

In addition to the above terms of imprisonment, Lemberger, Wank, Kannenberg, and Jaehnig were ordered to serve three years of supervised release. As conditions of that release, they were ordered to pay restitution for the insurance payout for the December 2010 arson totaling \$328,145. Lemberger was also ordered to pay restitution to the insurance company for the money fraudulently received resulting from the March 2009 residence fire totaling \$451,263.

In sentencing the defendants, Judge Griesbach noted the seriousness of arson offenses, specifically, the often life-threatening danger that such offenses creates for firefighters and potentially other citizens. He added that buildings and property are needlessly destroyed resulting in significant monetary losses to insurance companies and fraudulently obtained cash windfalls for arsonists. The sentences imposed served in part to deter other individuals contemplating arson for profit schemes.

The case was investigated by special agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Wisconsin Department of Justice-Division of Criminal Investigation, and detectives from the Brown County Sheriff's Office and the Washington County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney William J. Roach.

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