



**R. Booth Goodwin II, United States Attorney
Southern District of West Virginia**

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CONTACT: Tracy Dorsey Chapman
800-659-8726*(304)345-2200
Tracy.Chapman@usdoj.gov

BECKLEY MAN SENTENCED FOR ILLEGALLY STORING HAZARDOUS WASTE

BECKLEY, W.Va. – Rodney T. Hoffman, 43, of Beckley, West Virginia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Irene C. Berger to 30 months in prison and ordered to pay \$133,819.12 in restitution to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for storing hazardous waste without a permit.

Hoffman pleaded guilty in April 2010, admitting to his involvement with chrome plating at Mills Plating shop on Robert C. Byrd Drive in Beckley from 2004 through 2006. Hoffman admitted he cleaned out plating tanks and stored the waste materials, including sulfuric acid and chromic acid, on site without a permit. Hoffman further admitted he knew the waste was hazardous. The hazardous waste, stored in open containers and vats at the Robert C. Byrd Drive location, were abandoned at the shop on Robert C. Byrd Drive when the plating operation was moved to Harper Road in Beckley. According to court documents, the waste materials were illegally stored from October of 2006 until February of 2007, when it was discovered by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. Subsequently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency expended over \$133,000 conducting a cleanup of the site.

“Those who choose to jeopardize the health and safety of citizens by illegally storing or disposing of hazardous waste will be held accountable,” stated United States Attorney Booth Goodwin. “People are endangered, our environment suffers, and tax dollars are exhausted when those dealing with hazardous waste decide to cut corners. We will use every available tool to bring such violators to justice.”

“Illegally stored hazardous waste presents a danger to public health and a threat to the environment,” said David M. Dillon, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Criminal Enforcement in the Philadelphia Region. “EPA will investigate those who refuse to follow the rules and will work tirelessly to see that they are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

Evidence presented at sentencing revealed that Hoffman was previously convicted for violating the Clean Water Act. Hoffman pleaded guilty in 1999, admitting to dumping rinse water with

heavy metals into a drain leading to the municipal wastewater treatment system in Mabscott, West Virginia.

The investigation was conducted by EPA, with assistance from the state's Department of Environmental Protection. Special Assistant United States Attorney Perry McDaniel handled the prosecution.

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