



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2012
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**FORMER OWNER OF FLORIDA-BASED AIRLINE SERVICES COMPANY
SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR CONSPIRING TO DEFRAUD ILLINOIS-BASED
RYAN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES**

WASHINGTON – A former owner and operator of a Florida-based airline services company was sentenced today to serve 24 months in prison and to pay restitution for conspiring to commit wire fraud and honest services fraud in a kickback scheme to defraud Ryan International Airlines, a charter airline company located in Rockford, Ill., the Department of Justice announced.

Robert A. Riddell, the former owner and operator of a Florida aviation security and ground services company, was sentenced to serve 24 months in prison and to pay \$131,540 in restitution. On Oct. 17, 2011, Riddell pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in West Palm Beach, Fla., to participating in a conspiracy to defraud Ryan by making kickback payments to Wayne E. Kepple, a former vice president of ground operations for Ryan, in exchange for Kepple awarding business to Riddell's company. Riddell and Kepple also split the proceeds of fraudulent invoices submitted to Ryan for payment.

Ryan provides air passenger and cargo services for corporations, private individuals, professional sports teams and the U.S. government, including the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Marshals Service. Riddell's company provided ground security and other ground services coordination for Ryan flights in Europe.

According to court documents, from March 2006 through at least August 2009, Riddell paid Kepple more than \$330,000 in kickbacks, including payments based on fabricated invoices submitted by Riddell's company to Ryan. Kepple was in charge of contracting with providers of goods and services on behalf of Ryan and approving the invoices submitted by the providers to Ryan for payment. Riddell was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and honest services fraud, and one substantive count of wire fraud.

Including Riddell, four individuals have been charged in conjunction with this investigation. On Nov. 4, 2011, Kepple pleaded guilty to participating in a conspiracy to commit wire fraud and honest services fraud in three separate kickback schemes with co-conspirators to defraud Ryan, including his fraudulent scheme with Riddell. He is awaiting sentencing. On Aug. 12, 2011, David A. Chaisson and James E. Murphy pleaded guilty to participating in different conspiracies to defraud Ryan by making kickback payments to Kepple in exchange for winning contracts for their respective companies. On Oct. 28, 2011, Murphy was sentenced to serve 23

months in prison and to pay \$42,500 in restitution and Chaisson was sentenced to serve 16 months in prison and to pay \$50,742.48 in restitution.

The investigation is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's Atlanta Field Office and the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Inspector General, with assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida. Anyone with information concerning anticompetitive conduct in the airline charter services industry is urged to call the Antitrust Division's Atlanta Field Office at 404-331-7100 or visit www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.htm.

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