



News Release

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SAHA Supports Federal Investigation and Indictments

SAN ANTONIO, TX (June 18, 2009) --- Federal authorities, in cooperation with the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA), have uncovered suspected criminal activity, resulting in charges being filed in federal court against five SAHA employees. Four employees are believed to have accepted kickbacks from contracted vendors, and the fifth is charged with making a false statement to federal authorities.

“Our Board, along with our new President and CEO, Lourdes Castro Ramirez, is strongly committed to investigating any allegations of wrongdoing, and we will not tolerate improper conduct by employees or contractors, or the improper use of public resources,” said Ramiro Cavazos, Chair of SAHA’s Board of Commissioners.

Appearing in federal court today were Project Manager Robert Olivares, Maintenance Supervisor Roman Reyes, Maintenance Supervisor Alfredo Lopez and Senior Maintenance Technician Fidencio “Fred” Martinez. Charges are expected to be formally filed tomorrow against Project Manager Vaughn Manibog.

The indictments allege that Reyes, Olivares, Martinez and Manibog, “did corruptly solicit, demand, accept and agree to accept a thing of value...from a person, intending to be influenced and rewarded...” Lopez is accused of lying to federal authorities. Upon learning of the charges, SAHA immediately terminated the employees.

“SAHA will move swiftly to root out any criminal misconduct. As public servants, we must guard the public’s trust and promote the highest degree of integrity and professionalism,” said Castro Ramirez. “SAHA has approximately 600 employees, most of whom work hard every day to provide much needed services to the citizens of our community. I’m saddened that the misdeeds of a few tarnish the good works of so many others,” she added.

Over the past 12 months, SAHA’s Board of Commissioners has initiated various audits and reviews, to identify and resolve any areas of weakness in processes and internal controls. A number of accountability measures have recently been implemented, to include: reviewing all open contracts; centralizing construction contract activities; reducing approval limits for tighter management oversight; and engaging a government accountability consultant to conduct a full assessment of procurement process, systems and controls.