

## Covington man pleads guilty in septic tank scheme

By Bill Lodge

Advocate staff writer

A former septic system inspector for the Onsite Wastewater Program of the state's Center for Environmental Services admitted Monday in Baton Rouge federal court that he accepted approximately \$50,000 in bribes from a septic tank contractor.

Alan Forrest Pogue, 52, of Covington, pleaded guilty to a charge that he used a telephone in the bribery scheme, which extended from May 2009 until June 2011.

The septic tank contractor was Glenn Kelly Johnson, 71, formerly of Denham Springs. Johnson, who had moved to Brookhaven, Miss., also was charged in the case. Johnson died in April.

In an agreement signed by Pogue, Assistant Federal Public Defender Mark Upton and Assistant U.S. Attorney Rene I. Salomon, Pogue acknowledged that his guilty plea could subject him to a five-year prison term and fine of \$250,000.

Pogue admitted that Johnson bribed him for lists of property owners who were applying for state permits to install septic systems.

Visiting U.S. District Judge Patricia Minaldi asked whether Pogue viewed Salomon's summation of the FBI case as accurate.

"Is that what happened?" Minaldi asked Pogue.

"Yes, your honor," Pogue replied.

Minaldi accepted Pogue's guilty plea and scheduled him for sentencing on Sept. 20.

Court records signed by Pogue show he inspected residential and commercial septic systems in Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington parishes.

In 2000, court records in New Orleans show, U.S. District Judge Morey L. Sear sentenced Johnson to a three-year prison term for conspiracy to violate the Clean Water Act and obstruction of a criminal investigation.

The judge also ordered Johnson to pay a combined \$250,000 to at least 125 homeowners who had problems with septic tank systems he worked on in Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes.

All of those homeowners received their restitution, according to a court filing by prosecutor Stacey H. Mitchell of the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section in Washington, D.C.

Mitchell added that those homeowners' problems ranged from "interruption in sewage service to back-ups causing sewage to enter their homes through toilets, sinks and dishwashers."

Johnson's prison term in that case ran concurrently with a 51-month term Sear imposed for Johnson's admitted participation in a conspiracy to defraud the United States. In that case, the judge ordered Johnson to pay restitution of \$1.1 million to Hancock Bank of Louisiana.

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