



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Newark Field Office
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OWNER OF SEWELL, N.J LANDSCAPING BUSINESS SENTENCED FOR DIVERTING OVER \$2 MILLION OF BUSINESS RECEIPTS TO HIDE INCOME AND AVOID TAXES

Camden, N.J. – The owner of Down to Earth Landscaping and Irrigation, Inc., located in Sewell, N.J., was sentenced today to one year and one day in prison for tax evasion.

U.S. District Judge Robert B. Kugler also ordered Nicholas Lepore, 40, a resident of Deptford, N.J., to serve two years of supervised release and pay a fine of \$5,000.

“With the April 15 tax deadline about one month away, today’s sentence should send a clear message; tax evasion is a serious crime with serious consequences,” stated Jonathan D. Larsen, Special Agent in Charge, IRS-Criminal Investigation, Newark Field Office. “It is important for people to have confidence that when they file their tax returns and pay their taxes, their neighbors and co-workers are doing the same.”

At his plea hearing and according to court documents:

Lepore owned and operated Down to Earth Landscaping and Irrigation, Inc. (Down to Earth), which provided landscaping and irrigation services to commercial and residential customers in southern New Jersey. Down to Earth was a subchapter S corporation and as the owner, Lepore was required to report the flow through income and losses from Down to Earth on his personal tax returns.

Lepore admitted that he routinely cashed customer checks at local check cashing businesses to disguise the amount of income received by Down to Earth. During the following years, Lepore cashed Down to Earth customer checks in the following

amounts at local check cashing businesses: 2007 - \$746,415, 2008 - \$415,631, 2009 - \$317,053 and 2010 - \$669,763. Lepore admitted that he failed to file tax returns for the years 2007 through 2010 and thus, did not include any of the aforementioned customer checks as income.

The investigation was conducted by IRS-Criminal Investigation, Newark Field Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jonathan D. Larsen and the U.S. Attorney's Office, under the direction of U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason M. Richardson.

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