

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 06-417

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RELEASE DATE

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Brian Cota, Sr. Deputy District Attorney

CONTACT (805) 568-2424

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Re: Robert Lorin Musich, Case No. 1496861

WEST COVINA MAN SENTENCED IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY TO 7 YEARS STATE PRISON FOR OPERATING A STATEWIDE FIRE EQUIPMENT INSPECTION SCAM

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that Robert Lorin Musich, from West Covina, California, was sentenced in Department 10 of the Santa Barbara Superior Court to 7 years in state prison after pleading guilty on May 31, 2017 to 1 felony count of grand theft, 10 felony counts of forgery, and 3 felony counts of filing a false income tax return for tax years 2013-2015.

His crimes were related to his operation of a fire equipment inspection scam.

Mr. Musich also admitted an aggravated white collar crime enhancement, admitting that the loss to the victims of his scam exceeded \$500,000.

On August 9, 2016 a joint press release from the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department warned county residents of a fire inspection scam being seen in Santa Barbara County. The public was warned to be on the watch for invoices being sent to local businesses from a company called Red Mountain Security and Fire Protection or RMS. The invoices were for inspection of fire equipment at the businesses that never took place. The amount invoiced was \$413.11.

Along with the issuance of the press release, the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office began an investigation to determine the identity of the perpetrator of the scam.

On September 1, 2016, Mr. Musich was arrested in Pomona, California, and charged with crimes related to the scam.

After his arrest, the California Franchise Tax Board assisted the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office in investigating any potential tax related crimes.

SANTA BARBARA OFFICE
1112 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2300
Fax (805) 568-2453

SANTA MARIA OFFICE
312-D East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 346-7540
Fax (805) 346-7588

LOMPOC OFFICE
115 Civic Center Plaza
Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 737-7760
Fax (805) 737-7732

In March of 2017, charges of filing a false tax return for tax years 2013-2015 were added.

The investigation by the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office and the California Franchise Tax Board ultimately culminated in identifying 1,297 victims of Mr. Musich's scam throughout the State of California.

Additionally, when Mr. Musich was arrested at his home, officials also found multiple boxes full of hundreds of fraudulent invoices with envelopes, ready to be sent out.

District Attorney Joyce Dudley commented, "I want to commend the hard work and great investigation conducted by Supervising District Attorney Investigator, Chris Clement. Through his, as well as prosecuting DDA Brian Cota's, efforts, Mr. Musich will be held accountable for his crimes, and further victimization of businesses throughout California by Mr. Musich will be prevented."

In addition to the California Franchise Tax Board, the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, Ontario Fire Department, Pomona Police Department, West Covina Police Department, Nevada State Attorney General's Office, Lake Havasu Police Department, and the United States Postal Inspector all assisted the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office with the investigation and apprehension of Mr. Musich.

In addition to being sentenced to 7 years in state prison, Mr. Musich was also ordered to pay a total of \$524,089.30 in restitution to the 1,297 victims, \$85,282 to the California Franchise Tax Board, and a fine of \$100,000.

Mr. Musich's victims are located throughout all of California's fifty-eight counties, some of the victims of his scam are not yet aware that they were victims.

Through this press release, which will be released to news agencies state wide, Senior Deputy District Attorney Brian Cota, is asking anyone who believes they may have been a victim of Mr. Musich's scam to visit the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's website at www.countyofsb.org/da/ after July 3, 2017 where a list of the victims and the restitution amounts, ordered by the Court, will be posted for review. Along with this information, there will be further discussion on what to do if you discover that you were a victim of Mr. Musich's scam, and how to collect restitution in this case.

During the time that Mr. Musich was operating his scam in California, he was on probation in Nevada for charges stemming from the same time of scam. When he finishes his California state prison sentence, Mr. Musich will be transported to Nevada where he faces an additional 3 years in state prison for his crimes there.

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