



Riverside County District Attorney

# NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release  
June 11, 2014

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## **FIVE CHARGED IN MULTIMILLION DOLLAR WORKERS' COMP AND PAYROLL FRAUD CASE**

RIVERSIDE – The Riverside County District Attorney's Office has charged five owners, operators, and employees of a Corona-based paving company in a case involving wage theft, premium fraud, workers' compensation fraud, and payroll fraud.

Charged and arrested with various fraud-related counts are: Sabas Trujillo, DOB: 2-28-79, of Corona; Lucia Trujillo, DOB: 7-15-75, of Corona; Rick Trujillo, DOB: 5-20-77, of Corona; Laura Fitzpartick, DOB: 2-13-83, of Anaheim Hills; and Alex Trujillo, DOB: 9-11-87, of Pacoima. Sabas and Lucia Trujillo are married and Rick Trujillo is Sabas Trujillo's older brother. The three own and operate United Paving and Prestige Striping where Fitzpatrick and Alex Trujillo (no relation to the other Trujillos) are employed. The companies pave and re-pave streets and parking lots nationwide.

Some of the allegations in this case include: insurance premium fraud, workers being paid less than prevailing wages as agreed to in a contract, taking or receiving a portion of workers' wages, preparing false documents for submission to a government agency, and denying an employee workers' compensation benefits. It is alleged that the actions of those charged allowed them to illegally obtain about \$4 million. Civil documents have also been filed by the DA's Office which freezes \$6 million in assets of those charged.

About two years ago, dozens of then-current and former employees of the companies made complaints to the Inland Empire Premium Task Force saying they believed they had been cheated. The task force is comprised of representatives from the Riverside and San Bernardino county DA's Offices, the state Labor Commissioner's Office, Department of Insurance, and the Employment Development Department. An investigation was initiated which led to the service of search warrants at both companies. Computers, bank, payroll, and other documents were seized and examined requiring several wage audits to be conducted on several hundred projects which ultimately led to the filing of criminal charges.

"These types of crimes, or fraud, have a significant detrimental impact upon the economy of the state. They also impact not only the involved worker but also the competitive businesses that are properly following state law," Riverside County District Attorney Paul Zellerbach said. "It is always important to ensure that all businesses can compete on an even playing field and that they all appropriately follow the same rules and regulations."

State Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su said: "Public dollars should not be given to scofflaw contractors who ignore California public works laws and cheat their workers from hard-earned wages. This case shows that stealing wages from workers and falsifying payroll records to cover up a crime are felonies. I am proud of our partnerships with District Attorneys across the state, including the Riverside County DA, to send a clear message to those employers who commit wage theft, tax evasion and insurance premium fraud that they will not get away with it."

The case, RIF1402238, is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Michael Mayman of the DA's Insurance Fraud Unit.

For comment from the California Labor Commissioner's Office, contact spokesman Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046.