




Memorandum



Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General
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To: Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
Honorable Audrey M. Edmonson, Chairwoman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Mary T. Cagle, Inspector General 

Date: January 15, 2019

Subject: WASD Subcontractor Sentenced in Connection with Responsible Wages Fraud, Ref IG-17-0014-I

Last Friday, on January 11, 2019, Samuel J. Almazan, the owner of Almazan Construction LLC, pled no contest to three criminal charges stemming from his company's work on a Water and Sewer Department (WASD) construction contract. Mr. Almazan had been arrested last year, in March 2018, for submitting phony documentation to the Internal Services Department, Small Business Development Division (SBD). Suspecting that the paperwork was false, SBD referred the case to the OIG.

Almazan Construction was a sub-contractor to Poole & Kent Co. on WASD Contract S-890, a Consent Decree project to upgrade the Central District Wastewater Treatment Plant's Chlorination Facilities. Almazan's portion of the \$13.4 million contract was approximately \$184,000. The investigation determined that ten of Almazan's employees were paid less than they were entitled to—based on the County's schedule of wage rates. The OIG later obtained a statement from Mr. Almazan where he admitted to completing the back wage affidavits for his employees, forging their signatures on the checks and affidavits, and depositing the items into his personal account.

Friday's plea was to one count of Organized Scheme to Defraud, one count of Forgery, and one count of Uttering a Forged Instrument—all third degree felonies. Mr. Almazan was sentenced to five years reporting probation with the special conditions of paying a monetary donation to the Denise Moon victims' fund and costs of investigation to the OIG. Mr. Almazan, as part of the negotiated plea, also stipulated to a five-year term of debarment (the maximum period allowed under County Code), effectively prohibiting Mr. Almazan and any company in which he owns an interest from contracting with or otherwise doing business with the County. The ten employees had been earlier made whole by the prime contractor, Poole and Kent.

The OIG appreciates Internal Services Department's Small Business Development Division for its assistance during this investigation.

cc: Alex Ferro, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Kevin T. Lynskey, Director, Water and Sewer Department
Tara C. Smith, Director, Internal Services Department
Gary Hartfield, Division Director, Small Business Development
Cathy Jackson, Director, Audit and Management Services Department
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