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Houston Computer Administrator Sentenced to 12 Months in Prison for Hacking Former Employer's Computer Network

WASHINGTON - A former senior database administrator for GEXA Energy in Houston was sentenced today to 12 months in prison for hacking into his former employer's computer network, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Jose Angel Moreno for the Southern District of Texas.

Steven Jinwoo Kim, 40, of Houston pleaded guilty on Nov. 16, 2009, to one count of intentionally accessing a protected computer without authorization and recklessly causing damage. Kim was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Vanessa D. Gilmore in the Southern District of Texas. Kim was also ordered to pay $100,000 in restitution to GEXA Energy and to serve three years of supervised release following his prison term.

According to court documents, on Feb. 5, 2008, GEXA Energy terminated Kim from his position as a senior database administrator and revoked all his administrative rights and access to the GEXA Energy computer network. In pleading guilty, Kim admitted that in the early hours of April 30, 2008, he used his home computer to connect to the GEXA Energy computer network and a database that contained information on approximately 150,000 GEXA Energy customers. While connected to the computer network, Kim recklessly caused damage to the computer network and the customer database by inputting various Oracle database commands. Kim also copied and saved to his home computer a database file containing personal information on the GEXA Energy customers, including names, billing addresses, social security numbers, dates of birth and drivers license numbers. According to court documents, Kim's actions caused a $100,000 loss to GEXA Energy.

The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Thomas Dukes of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, and by Special Assistant U. S. Attorney Bret Davis representing the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas. The case was investigated by the U.S. Secret Service.

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