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U.S. Department of Justice
Northern District of Ohio

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United States Attorney

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Owner of P.C. Consultants of Wadsworth, Inc. Charged with Computer Intrusion of Merrick Graphics' Computer System

Gregory A. White, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, announced that a one count Information was filed today charging John Spoerndle, age 40, of 8650 Markey Drive, Wadsworth, Ohio, with causing damage to a protected computer system.

The Information charges that on February 24, 2006, Spoerndle, owner/operator of P.C. Consultants of Wadsworth, Inc., intentionally accessed a protected computer system without authorization, and as a result, caused damage to a protected computer totaling more than $5,000.00.

The Information charges that as the result of a business dispute between Merrick Graphics and P.C. Consultants of Wadsworth, Inc., on February 24, 2006, John M. Spoerndle, owner/operator of P.C. Consultants of Wadsworth, Inc., gained access to the computer system of Merrick Graphics without authorization, and disabled the administrator's log-in function on the Merrick Graphics computer by changing the administrator's password, thereby effectively preventing Merrick employees from administrating the company's computer system for a period of approximately six hours.

The Information charges that as a result, Merrick Graphics incurred expenses and suffered losses of at least $5,000.00, including employee time costs and outside consultant fees to inspect the computer system for potential disruption or damage to data or other system content.

If convicted, the defendant's sentence will be determined by the Court after review of factors unique to this case, including the defendant's prior criminal record, if any, the defendant's role in the offense and the characteristics of the violation. In all cases the sentence will not exceed the statutory maximum and in most cases it will be less than the maximum.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert W. Kern, Cybercrimes Coordinator for the Cleveland U.S. Attorney's Office, following an investigation by the Cleveland Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

An information is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.