

## Jersey County man sentenced for \$1.2 million dollar tax evasion and unlawful firearms possession

December 22 2014 10:27 AM



A Jersey County resident was sentenced to federal prison for tax evasion and possession of a firearm by a user of controlled substances on Dec. 19, 2014, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, Stephen R. Wigginton, announced today. David Ray, 55, of Fieldon, Illinois, was sentenced to 37 months in federal prison, a \$7,500 fine, \$1,272,904.83 in restitution, a \$200 special assessment and three years of supervised release. Ray also forfeited a gun collection valued between \$75,000-\$100,000.

“In stealing from all of us by failing to pay his fair share of taxes, Ray not only ended up forfeiting his gun collection, but he forfeited his privilege to live in his mansion for the much harsher living conditions of federal prison,” said United States Attorney Wigginton. Ray waived his right to face a grand jury indictment and pled guilty to charges brought directly by the U.S. Attorney’s Office on July 23, 2013.

Documents filed in District Court established that Ray committed tax evasion by using his various businesses to pay personal expenses, by vesting ownership of personal assets in the name of his businesses, and by filing false tax returns with the IRS or refusing to file a US Individual Tax Return all together. In tax years 2005-2010, Ray concealed income from the IRS for the purpose of limiting his tax liability resulting in him avoiding \$1,272,904.83 in federal income taxes that he otherwise would have been required to pay.

Ray agreed to make full restitution to the IRS as a condition of his guilty plea.

Ray was also convicted for possessing firearms while being a cocaine user. Evidence presented at the plea hearing established that federal agents seized 96 firearms and more than 2,500 rounds of ammunition from Ray's home when it was searched on Feb. 13, 2012. In addition, agents also seized 110 grams of cocaine from Ray's home. Ray admitted possessing the firearms as a hunter and gun collector. But he also acknowledged a serious cocaine habit, admitting that he purchased and used 3-5 ounces of cocaine every 2-3 weeks prior to his home being raided. Under federal law, drug users are categorically prohibited from possessing firearms. Ray was ordered to remain in custody of the United States Marshal pending his transfer to federal prison.

The investigation was conducted by agents from the Internal Revenue Service/Criminal Investigations, the Jersey County Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Steven D. Weinhoeft.

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