



Department of Justice

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**BUILDING CONTRACTOR COMPANY EXECUTIVE CONVICTED OF THEFT
FROM LABOR UNION, UNLAWFUL LABOR PAYMENTS, FRAUD AND MONEY
LAUNDERING**

WASHINGTON – The owner and CEO of a Greenbelt, Maryland, building contracting company was convicted today for stealing \$1.7 million from Local 657 of the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) and other related offenses.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, Assistant Director in Charge Paul M. Abbate of the FBI's Washington, D.C., Field Office, Special Agent in Charge Robin Blake of the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General Washington, D.C., Regional Office and District Director Mark Wheeler of the Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards Washington, D.C., District Office made the announcement.

Gary Amoes Cooper, 58, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, the owner and CEO of STS General Contracting, was convicted of conspiracy to commit theft from a labor organization, conspiracy to make unfair labor payments, wire fraud and money laundering following a jury trial before U.S. District Judge Amit P. Mehta of the District of Columbia. Sentencing has been scheduled for Feb. 27, 2017.

Evidence presented at trial demonstrated that Cooper and co-defendant Christopher Andrew Kwegan, the president of STS, conspired with Anthony Wendel Frederick Sr., the former business manager of Local 657 of LIUNA, to convert for personal use \$1.7 million in funds stolen from Local 657. LIUNA is a labor organization that represents laborers in the construction industry, and LIUNA's Local 657 represents construction laborers in Washington, D.C., and five adjacent counties.

According to trial evidence, from May 2013 to June 2014, Frederick directed \$1.7 million in Local 657 funds to STS for an unauthorized construction project and other work without the knowledge or authorization of the Local 657 Executive Board or officials in LIUNA. Cooper and Kwegan then directed part of the stolen funds from STS accounts toward a \$225,000 down payment and construction of a garage for a residential property acquired by Frederick, and gave Frederick's wife 50 percent ownership in a different construction corporation owned by Cooper. In addition, according to trial evidence, Cooper and Kwegan depleted an STS bank account containing only stolen Local 657 funds by withdrawing more than \$400,000 in cash, sending hundreds of thousands of dollars to third parties in Qatar and using the remainder for personal items, entertainment, shopping trips, hotel stays and overseas travel.

Frederick, 51, also of Upper Marlboro, and Kwegan, 58, of Randallstown, Maryland, previously pleaded guilty to the same offenses and await sentencing.

The FBI and the Department of Labor investigated the case. Trial Attorneys Vincent Falvo and David Karpel of the Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Gang Section are prosecuting the case.

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