



Department of Justice

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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For Immediate Release

CARDINAL LAWN AND LANDSCAPE, INC. AND ITS PRESIDENT BOTH PLEAD GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT VISA FRAUD

St. Louis, MO – William J. Richardet, 64, of Jefferson County, and Cardinal Lawn and Landscape, Inc., of High Ridge, MO, both pled guilty to one count each of conspiracy to commit visa fraud. Richardet appeared before U.S. District Court Judge Henry Autrey who accepted his plea and set sentencing for November 12, 2019.

According to court documents, from January 2012 until December 2017, Richardet knowingly caused Cardinal Lawn and Landscape, Inc. (Cardinal) to submit false and fraudulent claims and statements on both Form 9142s (submitted to Department of Labor) and Form I-129s (submitted to Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services) related to Cardinal's application to receive H-2B Non-Immigrant workers. On these forms, Cardinal and Richardet fraudulently represented that they would seasonally employ foreign workers to provide landscaping and grounds keeping labor exclusively for Cardinal. These statements were falsely made as Richardet intended to lease, and did lease, a number of the foreign workers to various other companies for profit. Over the course of the conspiracy, Cardinal and Richardet leased 74 H-2B Non-Immigrant workers to seven different companies.

“William Richardet and his company, Cardinal Lawn & Landscape, submitted false documents to the U.S. Departments of Labor and Homeland Security to perpetrate a scheme by illegally subcontracting foreign workers he sponsored for H2-B visas. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to vigorously pursue those who defraud worker visa programs for their own personal gain,” said Irene Lindow, Special Agent in Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

Richardet faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 or both. Cardinal faces a maximum fine of \$500,000 and 5 years probation. In determining the actual sentence, a Judge is required to consider the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provides recommended sentencing ranges.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, with the assistance of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, investigated the case. Assistant United States Attorney Kyle Bateman is handling the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office.