



U. S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
George E. B. Holding

Eastern District of North Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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NASH COUNTY CONVENIENCE STORE OWNER
PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS

RALEIGH - United States Attorney George E.B. Holding announced that in federal court today another person pled guilty in the on-going multi-defendant crop insurance fraud investigation. **RODNEY ALLEN DENTON**, 42, of Spring Hope, North Carolina, pled guilty before United States District Judge James C. Dever, III, to two counts of making material false statements, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001.

A Criminal Information was filed on March 29, 2010.

The on-going investigation of crop insurance fraud in Eastern North Carolina has revealed the use of check cashers by farmers who are trying to hide their tobacco sales. Between August 2006 and October 2007, law enforcement officers determined that 31 tobacco checks totaling approximately \$1,000,000.00 were cashed at **DENTON's** convenience store at Strickland's Crossroad in Nash County, North Carolina. **DENTON** had obtained the checks from one person, and the checks were payable in nominee names.

On October 16, 2008, and again on February 12, 2009, **DENTON** falsely claimed, during an interview with law enforcement, that

either he or his employee saw each payee on the check and verified their identifications.

North Carolina check cashers are required to be registered with the Office of the Commissioner of Banks, and under certain circumstances, must also register with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

At sentencing, scheduled for August 16, 2010, **DENTON** faces up to five years' imprisonment followed by up to three years supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000.00.

Investigation of this case was conducted by the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigations, the United States Department of Agriculture - Office of Inspector General, and Risk Management Agency - Special Investigations Branch. Assistant United States Attorney Banumathi Rangarajan, with the Office's Economic Crimes Unit, represented the government.

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