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United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Willamette Country Music Concerts President Pleads Guilty to Wire Fraud and Money Laundering

EUGENE, Ore.—The former president and minority owner of Willamette Country Music Concerts, LLC, who planned, managed, and promoted the annual Willamette Country Music Festival in Linn County, Oregon, pleaded guilty today after she falsified bank statements and financial summaries to influence the sale of her stake in the company.

Anne Hankins, 53, a resident of Springfield, Oregon, pleaded guilty to one count each of wire fraud and money laundering.

“With today’s guilty plea, Ms. Hankins has proven herself to be a serial fraudster,” said Craig Gabriel, Criminal Chief for the U.S. Attorney’s Office. “Falsifying bank statements and laundering money to fraudulently inflate the value of a company are serious federal crimes.”

“Ms. Hankins blatantly deceived her business associate and stole money that never belonged to her. However, today the curtains have come down and Ms. Hankins is facing the music for her fraud,” said Special Agent in Charge Bret Kressin, IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS:CI), Seattle Field Office.

According to court documents, as former minority owner of Willamette Country Music Concerts (WCMC), Hankins owned 49% of the company. As president of WCMC, Hankins was responsible for preparing monthly financial statements which she provided by email to the company’s majority owner who was based in Beverley Hills, California.

Beginning in September 2016 and continuing until March 2018, Hankins provided altered banks statements and false financial summaries to the majority owner to conceal WCMC’s true financial condition. In November 2017, the majority owner approached Hankins about purchasing her stake in the company and having Hankins continue to serve as the company’s president.

On or about February 7, 2018, Hankins sent an updated financial summary to the majority owner falsely reporting that the company had approximately \$1.1 million in its operating account. In reality, there was only \$16,000 in the company’s account. Based on these false financial statements, on March 1, 2018, the majority owner purchased Hankins’ stake in the company for \$1.5 million.

After receiving the majority owner’s payment, Hankins directed her credit union to issue a cashier’s check from her account to the Clerk of the Court for the District of Oregon to satisfy a

restitution order on a previous bank fraud conviction from 2001. Hankins thereby laundered the proceeds from one crime to pay her restitution on another.

On September 12, 2022, Hankins was charged by criminal information with one count each of wire fraud and money laundering.

Wire fraud is punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison and money laundering by up to 10 years in federal prison. Both charges also may result in fines of up to \$250,000, or twice the gross gains or losses resulting from the offense, and three years' supervised release.

Hankins will be sentenced on January 5, 2023, by U.S. District Court Judge Michael J. McShane.

As part of her plea agreement, Hankins has agreed to pay restitution as identified by the government and ordered by the court.

This case was investigated by IRS:CI and the FBI, and is being prosecuted by Gavin W. Bruce, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

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