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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MAHONING COUNTY COMMISSIONER SENTENCED TO JAIL

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO:

Mahoning County Commissioner, Frank A. Lordi, was sentenced today to jail after conviction of theft in office and ethics violations. Lordi was found guilty on February 24, 1999 by a Mahoning County jury, of a theft in office count, authorizing a public contract in which his private company had a financial interest, and conflict of interest charges. The charges were brought as a result of a probe conducted by a joint fraud task force that included the Ohio Ethics Commission. Lordi was released on bond, pending appeal.

Wayne County Common Pleas Judge Mark Wiest, serving on assignment as a visiting judge for the Lordi case, sentenced Lordi to 18 months in jail, and fined him a total of \$5,000 after receiving a pre-sentence report. David Betras, a local attorney appointed as a Special Prosecutor, and Assistant Special Prosecutor Paul Nick, who also serves as Investigative Counsel for the Ohio Ethics Commission, prosecuted the case. Reacting to Lordi's conviction and sentence, Betras stated, "There are real victims in this case. Everyone who goes to work everyday, plays by the rules, fights to make ends meet, and doesn't have time to monitor county government is a victim of a county commissioner doing this."

Lordi was convicted of theft in office for using county workers to conduct political activities on county time, and for voting as a Mahoning County Commissioner on a county loan which involved his business, ABC Fire Extinguisher of Youngstown. In addition, Lordi was found guilty of two conflict of interest charges for using his official position to secure fire equipment business from private companies who received Mahoning County funding.

Lordi resigned from office after being found guilty.

David Freel, Executive Director of the Commission, reacted to the sentence, stating, "A jury of his peers, in his community, found Lordi guilty. The judge found his misconduct to be serious and compelling enough to warrant a jail sentence. Combined with the impact of other events in federal court, the citizens of Mahoning County should now be able to expect their public servants to adhere to all ethical statutes that exist to protect their interest."

The Ohio Ethics Commission is an independent agency of state government charged with interpreting and administering the Ohio Ethics Law for many state and local public officials and employees. The Commission has been serving the public, and state and local governments, since its formation as part of the Ohio Ethics Law in 1973.