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Press Release
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**JOINT PRESS RELEASE: SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR AND OHIO
ETHICS COMMISSION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**FORMER SUMMIT COUNTY OFFICIALS GUILTY OF BRIBERY,
ETHICS, AND PUBLIC CONTRACT CHARGES**

SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR MICHAEL T. CALLAHAN ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT TWO FORMER SUMMIT COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE OFFICIALS - WILLIAM HARTUNG, THE FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION PLEADED GUILTY TO BRIBERY AND ETHICS CHARGES AND CINDY V. PETERS, THE FORMER GENERAL COUNSEL PLEADED GUILTY TO PUBLIC CONTRACT AND ETHICS CHARGES TODAY BEFORE SUMMIT COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT JUDGE JAMES MURPHY.

THE CHARGES ARE A RESULT OF AN ONGOING STATE AND FEDERAL PROBE, CONDUCTED BY THE SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE, THE OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION, THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AND THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.

"IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TASK FORCE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE AND PROSECUTE THOSE WHO HAVE VIOLATED THE PUBLIC TRUST, " PROSECUTOR CALLAHAN SAID.

HARTUNG ADMITTED SOLICITING OR ACCEPTING FROM JAMES ACHTERMAN, A VALUABLE THING OR BENEFIT FOR HIMSELF AND/OR CINDY PETERS, WITH THE PURPOSE TO CORRUPT OR IMPROPERLY INFLUENCE HARTUNG AND/OR

PETERS WITH RESPECT TO THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR DUTIES. ACHTERMAN ADMITTED PAYING \$197,000 TO PETERS FOR PRIVATE CONSULTING IN ORDER TO OBTAIN FAVOR IN SECURING SUMMIT COUNTY CONTRACTS, THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR BRIBERY, A THIRD-DEGREE FELONY, IS UP TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON AND/OR A \$ 10,000 FINE.

HARTUNG ALSO ADMITTED TO A CONFLICT OF INTEREST. SUMMIT COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT JUDGE JAMES MURPHY WILL SENTENCE HARTUNG ON THE BRIBERY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST CHARGES ON DECEMBER 21,1999.

PETERS ADMITTED AUTHORIZING A PUBLIC CONTRACT IN WHICH SHE HAD AN INTEREST ACHTERMAN, IN HIS EARLIER PLEA, ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIVING \$1,237,000 IN COUNTY CONTRACTS AND PAYING FEES TO PETERS. THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR HAVING AN UNLAWFUL INTEREST IN A PUBLIC CONTRACT, A FOURTH-DEGREE FELONY, IS UP TO ONE AND A HALF YEARS IN PRISON AND/OR A \$5,000 FINE.

PETERS ALSO ADMITTED TO A CONFLICT OF INTEREST. ACHTERMAN HAD ADMITTED PROVIDING THE RENT-FREE USE OF AN APARTMENT AND LAVISH MEALS TO SUMMIT COUNTY OFFICIALS.

JUDGE. MURPHY WILL SENTENCE PETERS ON JANUARY 18, 2000.

"THESE CONVICTIONS SHOULD REMIND PUBLIC OFFICIALS ENGAGED IN PRIVATE OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT OR CONSULTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH VENDORS TO THEIR PUBLIC AGENCIES THAT THEIR PERSONAL, PRIVATE INTERESTS CREATE CRIMINAL CONFLICTS THAT OFTEN LEAD TO SERIOUS AND DIRECT IMPROPER INFLUENCES UPON THEIR PUBLIC ACTIONS," EXPLAINED DAVID E. FREEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION.