

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
CENTRAL DISTRICT *of* ILLINOIS

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Central District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 29, 2021

Saint Augustine Man Charged with Bank and Wire Fraud Related to Theft of COVID-19 Relief Funds

PEORIA, Ill. – A federal grand jury indicted a Saint Augustine, Illinois, man, Michael L. Patch, 64, of the 100 block of West 3rd Street, on September 21, 2021, for allegedly committing one count of bank fraud and two counts of wire fraud from as early as April 2020 through this year. The indictment was unsealed during Patch's initial appearance in federal court in Peoria, Illinois, today.

The indictment alleges that Patch was the owner and operator of a now-defunct restaurant named Vernon Street Grill, located in Farmington, Illinois. Patch maintained a bank account for the business at the Bank of Farmington. Starting in or around April 2020, Patch allegedly applied for certain types of funding and programs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP") and the COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan ("EIDL"). The indictment asserts that through use of false and inflated gross receipts and payroll numbers, Patch was able to qualify for funding from the PPP and EIDL programs. The indictment further alleges that Patch knowingly provided loan documents to the Bank of Farmington containing materially false information for the purpose of receiving a loan through the PPP program, along with submitting a fraudulent loan application to the Small Business Administration for the purpose of obtaining funds from the EIDL program.

Patch was released on bond, and his next court appearance will be December 8, 2021.

If convicted, the maximum statutory penalties for the alleged crimes charged are up to 30 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and up to five years of supervised release for the bank fraud charge, and up to 20 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine and up to three years of supervised release for each wire fraud count.

Agencies participating in the investigation include the Illinois Department of Revenue Criminal Investigations and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas F. McMeyer is representing the government in the prosecution.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

Component(s):

Department of Justice

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