

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of South Dakota

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2021

Public Official Sentenced to 70 Months in Federal Prison

Defendant Prosecuted as Part of The Guardians Project, a Federal Law Enforcement Initiative to Combat Corruption, Fraud, and Abuse in South Dakota

Acting United States Attorney Dennis R. Holmes announced that a Peever, South Dakota, man convicted for his role in a bribery scheme was sentenced on October 4, 2021 by U.S. District Judge Charles B. Kornmann.

Public official Daniel Thomas White, age 46, was sentenced to 70 months in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay \$23,000 in restitution and \$100 to the Federal Crime Victims Fund.

According to court documents, the Dakota Nations Development Corporation ("DNDC") was an agency of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Sioux Tribe, a tribal government that received federal assistance in excess of \$10,000 during the one-year period between October 1, 2017, and September 30, 2018. At that time, White served as the Director of the DNDC. White's duties included, among other things, overseeing housing and construction projects of the DNDC.

DNDC established an entity called the SWO Elderly Village Limited Partnership. The purpose of the entity was to obtain tax credit financing to build an elderly village complex on tribal land. On April 22, 2016, SWO's tribal council passed a resolution, committing nearly \$3,000,000 to the project.

On October 27, 2017, DNDC contracted with Tatanka Contracting to do the earthwork associated with the elderly village project. The contract was for a guaranteed price of \$1,070,740, although a change order increased the total of the contract to \$1,129,679.

To secure the dirt work contract, owners of Tatanka bribed White and White accepted the agreed amount of \$30,000 as the bribe or kickback. Specifically, in November 2017, White did corruptly

solicit, demand, agree, and agree to accept a thing of value from a person or persons working for and on behalf of Tatanka Contracting, intending to be influenced and rewarded in connection with a transaction and series of transactions of the DNDC.

White pleaded guilty to his role in the bribery scheme on August 24, 2020. He was ordered to self-report to the U.S. Marshal's Service or Bureau of Prisons to begin serving his term of imprisonment at a date to be determined.

The investigation is being conducted by the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeremy R. Jehangiri prosecuted the case.

The case was brought pursuant to The Guardians Project, a federal law enforcement initiative to coordinate efforts between participating agencies, to promote citizen disclosure of public corruption, fraud, and embezzlement involving federal program funds, contracts, and grants, and to hold accountable those who are responsible for adversely affecting those living in South Dakota's Indian country communities. The Guardians Project is another step of federal law enforcement's on-going efforts to increase engagement, coordination, and positive action on behalf of tribal communities. Led by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the participating agencies include: Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Offices of Inspector General for the Departments of Interior, Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration, Agriculture, Transportation, Education, Justice, and Housing and Urban Development; Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division; U.S. Postal Inspector Service; U.S. Postal Service, Office of Inspector General.

For additional information about The Guardians Project, please contact the U.S. Attorney's Office at (605) 330-4400. To report a suspected crime, please contact law enforcement at the federal agency's locally listed telephone number.

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