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NEWS RELEASE

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Approved: KBD
Date: Thursday, April 1, 2021
Release No.: 21-032

KBD

Local Business Owner Convicted of Workers' Compensation Fraud

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Jose Velasquez (DOB 05/11/69), of Ojai, pled guilty to two counts of felony insurance fraud on March 30, 2021. At the time of his pleas, Velasquez paid full victim restitution to Wesco Insurance Company in the amount of \$30,483.

From March 1, 2015, through March 1, 2020, Velasquez owned and operated Velasquez Gardening located in Ojai. During that time, Velasquez systematically misrepresented the number of his employees and the total amount of his payroll to his workers' compensation insurance company, Wesco Insurance. This fraud resulted in an underpayment of insurance premiums totaling \$30,483. Velasquez's fraudulent actions resulted in inflated costs to his workers' compensation insurance company, which are ultimately passed on to local consumers. Further, Velasquez's fraud provided an unfair advantage by allowing him to underbid competitors by not paying his fair share of workers' compensation insurance premiums. Workers' compensation insurance fraud is not a victimless crime and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

This case was investigated by the District Attorney's Office Workers' Compensation Fraud Unit. Sentencing is set for April 28, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 23 of the Ventura County Superior Court. Velasquez faces a maximum sentence of six years in felony jail.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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