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**Office of the Inspector General  
Miami-Dade County**

# Memorandum

To: The Hon. Alex Penelas, Mayor

The Hon. Chairperson Barbara Carey-Shuler, Ed. D.  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Christopher Mazzella  
Inspector General

Date: July 15, 2004

Re: Arrest of Solid Waste Management Employee

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Attached is a news release relating to the arrest of Robert Whitehead (Whitehead), a County employee of the Department of Solid Waste Management. The OIG investigation into a scheme by waste tire truck haulers and Miami-Dade County employees to cheat the County truck scales and avoid paying dumping fees has, thus far, led to the arrests of six individuals.

Whitehead, a County waste truck driver, was pocketing cash from a tire vendor to dump tires at the County's Resource Recovery Facility. Using the County's waste truck, the tire vendor and Whitehead avoided paying \$1,424.00 in fees and were able to dispose of approximately 20 tons of tires at the County's Resource Recovery facility located at 6990 N.W. 97 Avenue. Whitehead received a total of \$150.00 in cash from the tire vendors to illegally dump the tires.

The investigation continues and additional arrests are expected. The County's Department of Solid Waste Management provided invaluable assistance in this matter. Based upon the OIG's suggestions and recommendations, the Department has made substantial changes in both personnel and administrative processes to deter future misconduct. We applaud their efforts to curb abuse and minimize the loss of revenues.

cc: Mr. George Burgess, County Manager  
Mr. Joseph A. Ruiz, Assistant County Manager  
Mr. Robert Ginsburg, County Attorney  
Mr. Vicente Castro, Assistant Director Technical  
Division, Department of Solid Waste Management

Clerk of the Board (copy filed)



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
News Release

ADDITIONAL ARREST IN EXPANDING SCHEME TO DEFRAUD  
COUNTY SCALEHOUSE

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office (SAO) announced today the arrest of a County employee, in connection with their long-term investigation of cheating the County's Resource Recovery Facility of dumping fees.

Robert Whitehead (Whitehead), age 38, who resides in Hollywood, Broward County, and has been a Miami-Dade County employee of the Solid Waste Department since February 2, 2000, was charged with two counts each of Grand Theft and Unlawful Compensation for defrauding the County of the mandated disposal fees. He surrendered to investigators of the State Attorney's Office. According to an affidavit filed by a Special Agent of the OIG, Whitehead is employed by the Solid Waste Department as a Waste Truck Driver. Whitehead is assigned to collect residential garbage and is not assigned to collect waste tires for the County; nevertheless he received cash from tire vendors to dispose of waste tires. While Whitehead pocketed the cash, the tire vendors escaped paying the dumping fees, and thereby the County was cheated of its revenues.

The affidavit alleges that on July 15, 2003, Whitehead dumped 11.66 tons of tires at the County's Resource Recovery facility. Because Whitehead drove a County waste truck to the facility, he was not charged the \$875.00 dumping fee that commercial waste tire haulers would have been charged for the disposal of waste tires. On July 18, 2003, Whitehead, again in his County waste truck, dumped 7.32 tons of tires at the Resource Recovery facility and cheated the County of a \$549.00 dumping fee.

Whitehead acknowledged to OIG investigators that he was paid \$50 and \$100 cash on separate occasions to collect tires in his garbage truck from an unnamed commercial tire hauler and then dump the tires at the County's Resource Recovery facility. As a result, the County incurred a loss of \$1,424.00 in dumping fees.

State Attorney Katherine Fernandez-Rundle and Inspector General Christopher Mazzella emphasized that their offices are committed to investigating all those who would seek to cheat the County of its ability to collect revenues for its services. This type of corruption hurts all citizens who rely and depend on the County to provide honest efficient services. Mr. Mazzella noted that, thus far, the OIG and SAO investigation into the various frauds perpetrated on the County's scale house has yielded six (6) arrests and identified over \$375,000 in lost revenues. The investigation continues and additional arrests are expected. The Inspector General also expressed his appreciation to the County's Solid Waste Management Department for its continued assistance in the investigation and applauded their efforts to deter future criminal misconduct by implementing certain oversight and systems changes.

Copies of the arrest warrant and arrest affidavit are available at the Inspector General's Office, 19 West Flagler Street, Suite, 220, telephone 305-375-1946 and at the State Attorney's Office, c/o Ed Griffith, 1350 N.W. 12 Avenue, telephone 305-547-0532.

Media Opportunity – Inspector General Mazzella will be available for a media opportunity today, between 1:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., at the OIG office.