



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORMER HUNTSMAN PLANT MANAGERS GUILTY; PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR POLLUTING ENVIRONMENT

(Beaumont) Two former managers of the Huntsman Chemical Plant in Port Arthur, Texas, pleaded guilty and were sentenced late yesterday to operating a tank containing hazardous benzene waste in violation of the Clean Air Act.

JEFFREY L. JACKSON, 49, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, former Plant Manager at the Port Arthur plant, and **MICHAEL PETERS**, 60, of Salado, Texas, former Environmental Manager of Huntsman's Jefferson County Operations, were sentenced by United States District Judge Thad Heartfield to five years probation, six months home confinement and fines of \$20,000 each.

According to documents presented by prosecutors, Jackson and Peters admitted that on February 11, 1996, a backup tank used to hold benzene-contaminated wastewater at the Port Arthur plant was in operation in direct violation of National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP). Jackson and Peters knew the tank was out of compliance with NESHAP regulations and failed to repair the tank or remove it from operation as required by the Clean Air Act.

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Matthew D. Orwig, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, was pleased with the sentence, "These men have finally admitted responsibility and are being held accountable for their criminal actions. This sentence sends a powerful message to those who are trusted to safeguard our communities from hazardous wastes. Individuals are accountable for their actions and will not be allowed to hide under the umbrella of companies and corporations while they pollute our environment."

"This sentence recognizes that individuals in positions to influence their company's compliance with the environmental criminal laws will be held responsible for their actions," said Assistant Attorney General Thomas L. Sansonetti of the U.S. Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "We are committed to enforcing the laws designed to protect our communities from danger to human health and the environment."

The case was investigated by members of the Texas Environmental Enforcement Task Force. Agencies involved in this case include the Special

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Investigations Unit of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division (Dallas and Houston), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Beaumont). Assistant United States Attorney Joe Batte and U. S. Department of Justice Environmental Crimes Section Trial Attorney Mary Dee Carraway prosecuted the case.

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