



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**John E. Murphy, Acting U.S. Attorney**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FRIO COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON**

**John E. Murphy, Acting United States Attorney**, announced that in San Antonio this morning, former Frio County Tax Assessor Hector Cantu, was sentenced to two years in federal prison for stealing over \$430,000 from the county's motor vehicle and property tax accounts.

In addition to the prison term, United States District Judge Xavier Rodriguez ordered that Cantu pay \$265,000 restitution and be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing his prison term.

Cantu was the elected tax assessor/collector for Frio County from 2000-2004. During his tenure in office, though he deposited checks received at his office into bank accounts controlled by the county, he also stole a great deal of cash as it came into his office. The accounts for which Cantu was responsible were: the motor vehicle account; the general account; the escrow account; and a special account. The missing money was always cash that had been received by the tax assessor/collector's office, but never deposited. Cantu's employees never had access to the bank statements, only the carbons of the deposit slips Cantu left behind when he would take the money to the bank for deposit, so they would never know what was actually deposited and what was not deposited.

On October 23, 2008, Cantu pleaded guilty to one count of theft.

"Mr. Cantu abused his authority as Frio County Tax Assessor," stated John Murphy, Acting U.S. Attorney. "Today's sentence should serve as a stern reminder of the consequences for those who take an oath to serve their community, yet break the law and violate the public's trust."

This case was investigated by the Texas Rangers and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney David Counts prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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