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Two plead guilty of vote fraud in Cahokia

BY TERRY HILLIG • > 618-659-2075

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BELLEVILLE • Two men pleaded guilty Friday to numerous vote fraud charges related to the April 2009 Cahokia village election.

The defendants, Kevin Wiggins and William Brown, were scheduled to go on trial Monday in St. Clair County Circuit Court on those counts and more.

State's Attorney Robert Haida said the men, as part of plea agreements, promised to testify in the trials of Cahokia village Trustees Kyle Johnson and Trevon Tompkin, who were indicted along with Wiggins and Brown. Johnson and Tompkin were both elected to the village board in the 2009 election.

Johnson's trial is set for later this month, and Tompkin's trial is scheduled in November.

Haida said prosecutors will recommend that Wiggins and Brown be sentenced to 30 months on probation and a year in the county jail.

Wiggins pleaded guilty to 43 charges; 39 other charges against him will be dismissed. Brown pleaded guilty to 22 charges, with 19 others to be dismissed.

Haida said Wiggins and Brown will be sentenced after the trials of Johnson and Tompkin. He declined to comment further on the pleas, citing the pending cases.

The four men were indicted by a grand jury in September 2009. Allegations in the charges include perjury, marking the absentee ballots of other people, soliciting others to apply for absentee ballots, falsifying applications for absentee ballots, unlawfully observing voting and mutilating election materials.

Suspicious were raised when an unusually large number of absentee ballots were cast in the election.

Three losing candidates for the village board filed a lawsuit challenging the election of Johnson and Tompkin, but a judge ruled earlier this year that the alleged fraud would not have affected enough votes to change the results.

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