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Former East St. Louis official sentenced to prison

BY TERRY HILLIG • > 618-659-2075

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EAST ST. LOUIS • Michael V. Collins of Swansea, a former Democratic precinct committeeman and former East St. Louis City Council member, was sentenced today to four years and two months in prison for tax evasion, failure to file tax returns and election fraud.

The 49-year-old Collins was found guilty by a federal jury in September of three counts of tax evasion, three counts of failure to file tax returns and two counts of election fraud. He was sentenced by U.S. District Judge William Stiehl.

Collins was ordered to pay \$342,375 restitution to the Internal Revenue Service.

Prosecutors said Collins had not filed a federal tax return for 13 years before a federal investigation and had not paid Illinois taxes for 22 years. They said he sought to evade taxes by commingling business and personal assets, by failing to provide accurate Social Security and employer's identification numbers, by falsifying payroll records and by failing to keep accurate records.

Collins was also found guilty of falsely claiming an East St. Louis address when he was elected a precinct committeemen there in 2006 and 2008.

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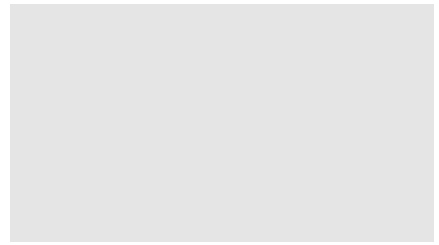
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