



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* WISCONSIN

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Wisconsin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 8, 2016

**Fire Chief of the United States Air Force Indicted for
Procurement Violation and Wire Fraud**

United States Attorney Gregory J. Haanstad of the Eastern District of Wisconsin, announced that on September 7, 2016, a federal grand jury returned an indictment against James E. Podolske Jr. (age: 59) of Panama City, Florida charging him with Procurement Fraud in violation of Title 41, United States Code, Section 2102 and Wire Fraud in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343. If convicted of these offenses, Podolske Jr. faces up to 25 years imprisonment, \$500,000 in fines, and 3 years of supervised release. The government is also seeking forfeiture of assets equivalent to the proceeds of any criminal activity.

According to the indictment, in February of 2013, Podolske Jr. while employed as an official with the United States Air Force, knowingly disclosed defense department contract bid or proposal information to give a competitive advantage to a corporate defense contractor identified in the indictment as "Company A."

The indictment further alleges that between 2009 and 2013, Podolske Jr. used his position as Chief of Air Force Fire Services to defraud approximately 25 business entities or individuals out of over \$133,000 intended for charity. Podolske Jr. organized an awards banquet and "charity" golf outing to coincide with a conference sponsored by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Podolske Jr. is alleged to have actively solicited donations for his golf outing from contractors and subcontractors seeking to do business with the Air Force and Department of Defense, including several in the Eastern District of Wisconsin. Some of the donations were forwarded to charities as intended, many donations, however, were deposited in Podolske Jr.'s personal bank account. He is alleged to have converted these charitable donations for his personal use to pay off credit card debt, pay for vacations, and for gambling at Gulf Shore casinos.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Defense Criminal Investigation Service, and the Naval Criminal

Investigation Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel R. Humble.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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