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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MAHONING COUNTY COMMISSIONER FRANK LORDI FOUND GUILTY

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO:

Mahoning County Commissioner, Frank A. Lordi, was found guilty yesterday, by a Mahoning County jury, of theft in office, unlawful interest in a public contract (both felonies), and two misdemeanor conflict of interest charges. The seven man, five woman jury deliberated for ten hours over two days. The charges were brought as a result of a probe conducted by a joint fraud task force that included the Ohio Ethics Commission.

Wayne County Common Pleas Judge Mark Wiest, serving on assignment as a visiting judge for the Lordi case, will sentence Lordi after receiving a pre-sentence investigation from the Adult Parole Authority. David Betras, a local attorney appointed as a Special Prosecutor, and Assistant Special Prosecutor Paul Nick, who also serves as Investigative Counsel for the Ohio Ethics Commission, prosecuted the case.

After the verdicts, Betras stated, "I am not personally gratified that a conviction was rendered here. This is a sad day and a happy day. It is sad that one of our office holders was convicted and happy that the fraud probe is coming to an end."

Lordi was found guilty of theft in office for using county workers to conduct political activities on county time, and for voting as a Mahoning County Commissioner on a county loan which involved his business, ABC Fire Extinguisher of Youngstown. In addition, Lordi was found guilty of two conflict of interest charges for using his official position to secure fire equipment business from private companies who received Mahoning County funding.

David E. Freel, Executive Director of the Ohio Ethics Commission, stated "The Ethics

Commission is never happy to see a public servant found guilty of misconduct in office. In this case, a Mahoning County jury found the evidence supported convictions. And by so doing, that they want honest and ethical government."

The jury found Lordi not guilty of 12 remaining counts including theft and related charges. Lordi, however, is expected to be sentenced in several weeks and could face a maximum sentence of 5 1/2 years in prison and \$6,000 in fines. Lordi was represented by Attorney Lou D'Apolito who has said he will appeal the ruling.

Mahoning County Prosecutor Paul Gains responded to the conviction by saying that he will move within the next few days to file a legal action to remove Lordi from office if he does not voluntarily "do the right thing" and step down.

The Ohio Ethics Commission is an independent agency of state government charged with interpreting and administering the Ohio Ethics Law for many state and local public officials and employees. The Commission has been serving the public, and state and local governments, since its formation as part of the Ohio Ethics Law in 1973.