

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024039595273 KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Prairie Village, Kansas, man pleaded guilty in federal court today to engaging in two separate fraud schemes related to millions of dollars in false payday loan debt and to tax evasion totaling more than \$8 million. “This well-dressed thief victimized millions of Americans whose personal information was fraudulently sold to debt collectors,” Garrison said. “Some of those victims, in their fear and confusion, actually paid debts they didn’t owe. And by hiding his income and assets then lying about it to federal agents, he victimized every honest citizen who obeys the law and pays their income taxes. His thievery allowed him to enjoy a luxurious lifestyle for a short time, but he won’t be entitled to such luxuries in federal prison.” “Today, Mr. Tucker admitted he evaded the payment of taxes assessed against him. Despite receiving millions of dollars, Mr. Tucker used such funds to sustain a lavish lifestyle and not fulfill his civic duty,” said Adam Steiner, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the St. Louis Field Office. “We are determined at the IRS and Department of Justice to halt tax evasion, and the facts outlined in today’s plea are strong indicators that we can and will find this fraudulent activity.” Joel Jerome Tucker, 51, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Roseann Ketchmark to one count of transporting stolen money across state lines, one count of bankruptcy fraud, and one count of tax evasion. Tucker, working through various companies, serviced payday loan businesses. Tucker’s company names changed over the years; the primary company was eData Solutions, LLC. eData, formally registered on July 29, 2009, did not make loans directly to borrowers; it collected loan application information, referred to as leads, and sold those leads to its approximately 70 payday lender clients. As a loan servicer, eData also provided software for payday lenders. Tucker and the other owners of eData sold the company to the Wyandotte Indian tribe in 2012. However, despite selling his interest in eData, Tucker maintained a file of 7.8 million leads he had acquired through eData, containing detailed customer information (including names, addresses, bank accounts, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, etc.). eData had collected the detailed customer information from online payday loan applications or inquiries to its payday lender clients; the file did not represent loans that were made. In addition, Tucker obtained and retained data regarding defaulted payday loans eData had acquired from a number of different payday lender clients. Tucker used these files to create falsified debt portfolios. By pleading guilty today, Tucker admitted that he engaged in a fraudulent debt scheme from 2014 to 2016. This scheme involved marketing, distributing, and selling false debt portfolios. Tucker defrauded third party debt collectors and millions of individuals listed as debtors through the sale of falsified debt portfolios. Tucker sold supposed debts which: 1) he didn’t personally own; 2) were not true debts; 3) had already been sold to other buyers; and 4) contained false lenders, false loan dates, false loan amounts, and false payment status. Tucker received as much as \$7.3 million from the sale of false debt portfolios. As part of his fraud scheme, Tucker transferred the proceeds of the fraud scheme across state lines. Tucker also admitted that he executed a related bankruptcy fraud scheme in 2015. In his bankruptcy fraud scheme, Tucker also sold fraudulent debt, which entered the United States Bankruptcy Courts nationwide. When the United States Bankruptcy Court investigated these purported debts which were presented as claims in bankruptcy cases, Tucker provided false information and testimony to the Bankruptcy Court in order to conceal his scheme. For tax years 2014 - 2016, neither Tucker personally nor any of his companies filed federal tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service. Tucker told IRS agents that he had no income and was living on borrowed money, including a lot of borrowed money from his mother. In reality, Tucker used nominee bank accounts to conceal income and assets and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal living expenses such as vehicles, chartered jets, travel and entertainment, and a personal residence. Tucker also submitted a form to the IRS in which he omitted listing as an asset his membership in the Vail Mountain Club, for which he received \$275,000 in 2016. Under the terms of today’s plea agreement, Tucker must pay \$8,057,079.95 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service. Tucker also must forfeit to the government \$5,000, which is the amount of stolen proceeds transferred across state lines as referenced in the specific count to which he pleaded guilty. Under federal statutes, Tucker is subject to a sentence of up to 20 years in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office. This case is

being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kathleen D. Mahoney and Patrick D. Daly. It was investigated by the FBI, IRS-Criminal Investigation, and the U.S. Bankruptcy Trustee in the Southern District of Texas.