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NEWS RELEASE

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DAVECO LIQUOR STORE OWNER SENTENCED IN THEFT CASE

The owner of Daveco Liquors, who pleaded guilty last November to racketeering, was sentenced on Friday to the stipulated sentence of 2 years of Economic Crime Unit probation and ordered to pay \$1,309,423.83 in restitution.

Hani D. Sawaged (dob: 01-30-53) pleaded guilty to violating the Colorado Organized Crime Control Act (F2) in a case in which he was accused of a scheme to underpay sales tax to the City of Thornton and the State of Colorado.

Hani Sawaged's two brothers also pleaded guilty last year in connection with the case.

Ghassan D. Sawaged (dob: 12-02-54), and **Bassam D. Sawaged** (dob: 11-26-63) pleaded guilty to theft and failure to file a tax return. They are serving a one-year deferred judgment sentence and have been ordered to jointly pay \$200,000 in restitution for their role in the scheme.

An investigation by the City of Thornton Auditor's Office, the Thornton Police Department and the Colorado Department of Revenue found that from at least January 2007 through August 2008, Sawaged and his brothers logged fictitious merchandise returns and took \$5.4 million dollars in cash from Daveco Liquors. The result of this activity was underreporting and underpaying sales tax to the City of Thornton and to the Colorado Department of Revenue causing losses in excess of \$1-million dollars.

The additional amount of restitution reflects additional underreported sales tax, interest and the cost of prosecution. The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Kandace Gerdes.