

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**FROM: Catherine L. Hanaway  
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March 31, 2009  
For Immediate Release

## **LOCAL EMISSIONS INSPECTOR SENTENCED ON CLEAN AIR ACT VIOLATIONS**

St. Louis, MO: Mark Banskter was sentenced to 10 months in prison on charges of violating the Clean Air Act by falsifying auto emission tests, United States Attorney Catherine L. Hanaway announced today.

Banskter is a licensed emissions inspector and the owner and operator of American Automotive Sales and Service, located at 1457 Vandeventer, St. Louis. American Automotive Sales is licensed by the Missouri Highway Patrol to conduct auto emissions tests as required by law.

In May 2008, the Missouri State Highway Patrol reviewed its Vehicle Inspection Database and identified 32 vehicles fraudulently tested/clean scanned by Mark Banskter from October 2007 through May 2008. Banskter entered the correct identifying vehicle information in the computer but instead connected the Sys Tech equipment to a vehicle he knew would pass. The actual VIN number from the scanned vehicle downloads to the Vehicle Inspection Data Base alerting the Highway Patrol of the fraudulent inspection. Instead of using vehicles that had previously failed or showed equipment malfunctions, and would not meet required emissions standards, Banskter used different vehicles, including one of his own, that he knew would pass the emissions test. Owners of some of the vehicles identified by the Missouri State Highway Patrol confirmed that they paid inflated charges of \$100 to \$125 to Banskter to fraudulently obtain the passing emissions tests.

Banskter, 46, St. Louis, 63110, pled guilty last December to one violation of the Clean Air Act, and appeared today for sentencing before United States District Judge Carol E. Jackson.

Hanaway commended the work on the case by Region 7 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources; and First Assistant United States Attorney Michael W. Reap, and Special

Assistant United States Attorney Anne Rauch, who handled the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office.