

Head of filter sales co. pleads in Ponzi scheme

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KIRKSVILLE, MO — A Kirksville man whose company sold air and water filtration systems has pleaded guilty to operating a Ponzi scheme that defrauded 26 investors of more than \$844,000, the *Kirksville Daily Express* **reported** July 1.

Jan Diltz of the US Attorney's Office was quoted by the newspaper as saying that Neal A. Jackson, who pleaded guilty to one count of felony mail fraud, used companies named The Money Tree and Gestalt Group Ltd. in the scheme.

The newspaper said The Gestalt Group was formed in 1990 to sell the filtration systems through a multi-level marketing program. After deciding the company would not be viable, he convinced people involved in The Money Tree to invest in The Gestalt Group. The article said Jackson then used the investments for his own personal use, to pay back previous investors and purchase unauthorized stocks and options.

Jackson then lost all of the invested funds through bad stock investments and was unable to pay the original investors, according to the article. One of the investors was an elderly woman who gave Jackson \$230,000 over a five-year period. As a result of the loss, she can no longer afford to live in an assisted living home, according to the report.

Jackson faces sentencing July 18 in St. Louis, and could receive up to 20 years in prison and/or up to \$250,000 in fines, the newspaper said.