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# Company charged with underpaying workers

By William Polk  
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An Escondido landscaping business and two of its principals have been indicted on charges of fraud and violations of federal prevailing-wage standards on a government-backed, low-cost housing project.

Named in a 12-count indictment returned yesterday are Irriscape Construction Inc., located on Sunrise Mountain Drive in Escondido; company president and chief executive officer Robert Henking Smith, 29, also of Sunrise

Mountain Drive, and Karl Lance Scott, 45, of the 1000 block of Redwood Avenue, El Cajon.

The defendants are accused of underpaying their employees by \$50,000 to \$70,000 for work on the 500-unit Marina Cove apartment project at the intersection of West Point Loma and Nimitz boulevards in San Diego.

Irriscape was hired as a subcontractor on the \$18.3 million project and was assigned to install a landscaping and irrigation system under a \$500,000 contract.

U.S. Attorney Peter K. Nunez said Irriscape was hired

by the prime contractor on the project, P.B.M.C. Inc., which was not the focus of any government charges.

"Because the government guaranteed the \$18.3 million construction loan to the project's developer, Lincoln Property Associates," Nunez said, "all subcontractors were required to pay predetermined prevailing wages (for specific crafts and specialties)."

The indictment charges that Irriscape not only underpaid workers, but required some workers to work 50 hours for 40 hours' pay.