

# Pay: 8 firms are charged with substandard wages in county

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employees were being paid only slightly below the prevailing rate. In some cases, however, he said, the underpayments amounted to \$3 to \$4 per hour below the rate.

A Department of Labor official said the government will seek to have the firms named in the complaint prohibited from bidding on government contracts for three to five years.

Named in the complaints filed yesterday are:

● Meredith-Worley Inc. of Vista, its two major principals, Ralph Meredith and Herman Worley, and a foreman, Tom Franklin.

The company had a \$1.7-million contract to paint buildings at Camp Pendleton. The Department of Labor determined that 86 employees were underpaid \$399,665.

● Thomas Electric of El Cajon, charged in connection with its \$90,554 subcontract work on the Golden Age Garden Apartments, 740 S. 36th St., San Diego. Ten employees were allegedly underpaid \$21,411.

The firm's president, Glenn Thomas, also is charged with making a false report to the Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding the wages.

● United Constructors of El Cajon, involved in a \$162,000 subcontract on the Golden Age housing project, accused of underpaying 18 employees \$24,940.

● Henry Rock, owner of Rainbow Construction of Hemet, involved in a \$525,584 subcontract on the Mariner's Cove federally sponsored housing

project at Nimitz Boulevard and W. Point Loma Boulevard, charged with underpaying eight workers \$32,855.

● Ramon Aguilar, a principal in Hacienda Landscape of Lemon Grove, accused of underpaying 86 employees \$137,577. The firm had a \$763,350 prime contract on Freeway I-15 in the Miramar and Poway areas and a \$190,943 subcontract on Freeway I-8 east of College Avenue to west of Fletcher Parkway.

● William Baker, former owner of Baker Electrician, 5570 University Ave., charged in connection with a \$99,850 electrical subcontract on the \$1.5 million Cerro Pueblo low-income housing project for the elderly at 2825-45 Clairemont Dr. Three employees were allegedly underpaid \$40,021.

● RGR of Ramona, its president, Mike Good, and foreman, Don Buss, accused of underpaying 29 workers \$40,021. Charges involve work on the \$2.6 million Montecito Village Apartments public housing project at 1464 Montecito Road, Ramona. The project was financed by HUD.

● TWN of San Diego, in connection with a \$129,037 Navy contract for electrical work at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot. Ten employees were allegedly underpaid \$28,780.

The companies and individuals named in the complaint are charged with falsely telling the federal government that they were paying prevailing wages. The maximum penalty for false statements in reporting wages is a five-year prison sentence and a \$10,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eve D. Bermingham said yesterday that the

majority of firms and individuals charged have agreed to pay the back wages owed.

It will be up the judge involved to decide whether the firms and officers will still face criminal penalties even if they repay the wages owed the employees, Bermingham said.

Bowie said the charges follow an investigation by the Offices of the Inspectors General of the departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development, with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Naval Investigative Service.

William Landreth, an agent with the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Labor, said at the press conference that in fiscal year 1984 a total of 1,280 employees in Southern California were involved in underpayment of \$1.7 million on their wages.

Bowie said authorities are concerned not only about protecting employees but honest contractors as well — those who are precluded from winning government contracts because of low bidding by those who do not intend to pay prevailing wages.

Bianco, the Oceanside welding company owner named in Friday's indictment, is to be returned here soon from Illinois to face charges of inducing kickbacks from five of his former employees and for making false statements about the payment of some of his workers in 1983.

Bermingham said the kickbacks involve threats of loss of employment if part of the wages paid were not turned over.

## 8 firms face substandard pay charges

By Bill Ott  
Staff Writer

The U.S. Attorney's Office yesterday charged that eight companies paid substandard wages to workers on federally funded construction projects in San Diego County.

Yesterday's criminal complaints followed a grand jury indictment returned Friday against Alan Jay Bianco, owner of Bianco Welding in Oceanside.

Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter W. Bowie said at a press conference that yesterday's complaints and Friday's indictment allege that 256 construction workers are owed \$712,000 in connection with employment at the firms.

The firms are charged with violating the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires that workers on federal projects be paid at the prevailing rate of the local area.

Bowie said that in most cases the

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