

# Penalty imposed in wages case

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The former owner of a small firm that paid substandard wages on a subcontract for electrical work at a federally funded housing project here was ordered yesterday to make restitution to three underpaid workers, was fined \$1,000 and placed on probation for three years.

U.S. District Court Judge Leland C. Nielsen imposed the penalty on William Baker, former owner of Baker Electrician.

Baker, now employed by another firm, pleaded guilty to making a false statement in certifying to federal authorities in 1982 that he was paying his workers prevailing rates of the community. In entering his plea, he voluntarily agreed to being barred from bidding on any government projects during his probation.

The criminal complaint on the false statement alleged that he underpaid three workers \$18,760 in con-

nection with a \$99,850 subcontract on the \$1.5 million Cerro Pueblo low-income housing project for the elderly at 2825-45 Clairemont Drive.

The Davis-Baker Act requires that workers on federally funded projects be paid at the prevailing rates of the local area involved.

Baker's attorney, Warren Williamson, told the court that \$21,000, representing the last payment on his former subcontract, has been withheld by the government and is sufficient to make restitution on the pay owed to the three employees.

Baker is among nine firms and individuals charged with making false statements in connection with the requirement to pay prevailing rates on federally funded projects.

In other developments yesterday, guilty pleas to false statement allegations were entered by Glenn Thomas, president of Thomas Elec-

tric in El Cajon, and by the firm itself.

Thomas and his firm were charged in connection with a \$99,554 subcontract on the Golden Age Garden Apartments, 740 S. 36th St., San Diego. Ten employees were allegedly underpaid \$21,411.

Attorney Ray Zvetina, representing Thomas, said his firm is a small, non-union shop and his bid for the work was based on non-union pay scales.

Thomas and his firm entered pleas under an agreement in which the government will file no additional charges in connection with the incident. Thomas also agreed to be barred from bidding on government work and to make restitution to employees.

He and his firm are scheduled to be sentenced on April 1.

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