

Kansas City Business Journal - May 7, 2007  
<http://kansascity.bizjournals.com/kansascity/stories/2007/05/07/daily8.html>



**BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY:** [Predict Sprint Nextel's future.](#)

## Jury convicts Grandview man of fraud

Kansas City Business Journal - 3:01 PM CDT Monday, May 7, 2007

A federal jury on Friday convicted a Grandview man for a series of fraud schemes that resulted in a loss of \$1.5 million by a Las Vegas church and several individual victims.

The jury convicted Jason E. Branch Sr., 42, of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and wire fraud from Jan. 1, 2003, to March 30, 2005, along with additional counts of mail fraud and money laundering, John Wood, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, said in a release.

Branch solicited investors through sales seminars in Kansas City, Florida and Georgia, as well as through the Internet and by using independent mortgage or financial brokers to assist in the sale of loan products, Wood said.

The jury in U.S. District Court in Kansas City deliberated three hours before returning the guilty verdict to Judge Gary Fenner, ending a trial that began April 30.

A sentencing hearing hasn't been set, said Don Ledford, a spokesman for Wood.

Branch was convicted on 14 counts, most of which carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison, Ledford said.

At trial, prosecutors showed that Branch had solicited potential investors to one or more loan or investment products he offered, depending on the investors' willingness and ability to pay, Wood said. In some instances, large investors were offered the opportunity to obtain sizable loans after paying advance fees that ranged from \$20,000 to \$200,000, Wood said. Branch offered others investment opportunities with high rates of return. In other instances, smaller investors were offered a "multilevel marketing program" through an online entity for which each investor paid \$100 to \$200, Wood said.

In reality, Branch had no source of financing for the promised loans or lines of credit and never intended to provide such loans or lines of credit, Wood said. The investment opportunities did not exist, and Branch instead converted the money investors provided to his use.

Branch conducted business using the name J.E. Capital Group, a business owned by Branch but never formally incorporated, Wood said.

Among the victims of the fraud scheme was Greater St. Paul Church of God in Christ in Las Vegas, Wood said. The church was seeking a \$3.75 million loan for new construction when it was referred to Branch and J.E. Capital Group by a real estate broker. Branch agreed to provide the loan and requested a payment of advance loan fees in the amount of \$150,000. The church paid the fees but never got a loan, and Branch converted the advance fees to his use.

In a previous administrative forfeiture action, the government seized a 2005 Chrysler and a 2000 Land Rover as proceeds of the scheme, Wood said.

[Contact the Editor](#)

[Need Assistance?](#)

[More Latest News →](#)

[Subscribe or renew online](#)

*All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.*