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Contractors plead guilty in Big Dig fraud scheme

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BOSTON -- Two former managers of a Big Dig contractor have pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to submit false bills for workers' time.

Ryan McCourt of Quincy and Kenneth Hartley of California pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court to a single-count information charging them with conspiracy to commit fraud on a federal highway project.

Prosecutors say they falsely categorized apprentice ironworkers as higher-paid journeymen, overbilling the project by about \$300,000 between 2002 and 2005.

Both men worked for the McCourt Construction Company, which pleaded guilty earlier to the scheme. The company said the problem was "isolated" and "not consistent" with its commitment to integrity.

Hartley and Ryan McCourt are to be sentenced October 1st.

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