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**Office of the Inspector General**  
**Miami-Dade County**

# Memorandum

To: The Honorable Alex Penelas, Mayor

The Honorable Chairperson Barbara Carey-Shuler, Ed.D.  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Christopher Mazzella,  
Inspector General

Date: August 26, 2003

Re: Arrest of Mikel Isaac, President of Isaac Associates

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For your information, I am attaching a news release issued by my office today announcing the arrest of Mikel Isaac, President of Isaac Associates, a Broward County firm. The OIG investigation is focusing on a widespread scheme by former and current County employees, and contractors to obtain false certificates of completion and/or occupancy. We anticipate that some dozen arrests will be made in the next several months. Isaac's arrest is the first in this case. The allegations of misconduct involved in this investigation were brought to the attention of the OIG by the Building Department. The Zoning and Planning and Building Departments are assisting the OIG in this matter.

cc: Mr. George M. Burgess, County Manager  
Mr. Charles Danger, P.E., Director, Building Department  
Ms. Diane O'Quinn-Williams, Director, Planning & Zoning Department  
Mr. Herminio Gonzalez, P.E., Director, Building Code Compliance

Clerk of the Board (copy filed)



**News Release**  
**Building Code Arrest**

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) today announced that approximately six months ago, it and the Dade County State Attorney's Office began investigating a widespread scheme by current and former county employees, building contractors, and others to corruptly violate sections of the South Florida Building Code dealing with building permits and required inspections. This code was enacted after Hurricane Andrew to protect the public from unsafe construction. The investigation has determined that offenders fraudulently manipulated county systems to obtain certificates of completion and/or occupancy for both renovated and newly constructed homes without obtaining proper permits or conducting mandated inspections as required by the Building Code.

According to Inspector General Christopher Mazzella, there may very well be hundreds of structures, including homes and businesses that have received occupancy and/or completion certificates illegally, thereby exposing the community to considerable public safety concerns. In a number of circumstances, the OIG also found that some innocent homebuyers purchased residences that were renovated or newly constructed without knowing that the certificates of completion were issued illegally. It may now cost these homeowners thousand of dollars to correct building deficiencies and bring their dwellings into compliance with the Building Code. The OIG expects that at least a dozen arrests will be made in the next few months.

The first arrest occurred this morning. Mikel Isaac, age 32, a resident of Pembroke Pines, Florida, was charged with grand theft and practicing engineering without a license. According to an arrest warrant affidavit filed by a Special Agent of the OIG, Isaac is the President of Isaac Associates, Inc., 7130 S.W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33023. This company engages in the business of expediting commercial and residential building plans and obtaining certificates of completion and/or occupancy. The investigation determined that in December 2001, Fitzroy and Rosemarie Cargill, who reside at 1425 N.W. 191st Street, Miami, Florida, hired Isaac for \$2,500.00 plus other fees to prepare drawings for the renovation of their residence and to obtain building permits and the completion certificate from the Building Department. As of September 2002, they paid Isaac \$1,800 in cash, of the total price.

Unfortunately for the Cargills, the certificate of completion Isaac delivered to them was fraudulently obtained because the renovations were not inspected as required under Florida law. OIG Special Agents also determined that though Isaac claimed to be an engineer to the Cargills and others, he is not licensed as an Engineer in Training, nor licensed as a Professional Engineer in the State of Florida.

The affidavit further alleges that in June 2003, Isaac attempted to cover up his fraudulent activities after the Planning and Zoning Department, at the request of the OIG, issued notices to the owners of suspected structures that required them to provide proof of proper inspection at the time of construction. Upon receipt of this notice, the Cargills contacted Isaac who told them he would take care of the problem. Later, after the Cargills received another notice revoking their certificate of completion, Isaac abruptly came to their residence and retrieved all the documents he provided them, including the permits and the certificate of completion.

In July 2003, Isaac provided the Cargills with an As-Built certificate that he claimed would satisfactorily close out the permit on their property. However, upon further inspection by the OIG and the Building Department, it was determined that the information contained in the As-Built, though certified by a licensed engineer, was false. Significantly, items noted as present in the As-Built certificate, such as a "CBS wall" and "8x12 columns" are simply non-existent in the Cargill construction. Other glaring contradictions were found relating to the building materials certified as being used in the Cargill construction and the methodologies and tests allegedly employed in making the determinations used for the As-Built Certificate. This As-Built Certificate was provided by Adalberto Pascual, President of EGN, Inc., 7700 North Kendall, suite 602, Miami, Florida. Mr. Pascual has stated to Special Agents of the OIG that the As-Built Certificate was drafted based upon Isaac's representations.

Inspector General Mazzella expresses his gratitude to the Building Department for notifying the OIG about these transgressions and confirmed that the OIG is working closely with Planning and Zoning and the Building Departments on this matter.

Copies of the arrest warrant and arrest affidavit for Isaac are available at the Inspector General's Office, 19 West Flagler Street, Suite, 220, telephone number 305-375-1946 and at the State Attorney's Office, c/o Ed Griffith, 1350 N.W. 12 Avenue, telephone number 305-547-0532.

Media Opportunity – Inspector General Mazzella will be available for a media opportunity today between 1:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. at the OIG office.