

Rep. Renzi named in 35-count indictment

by UPI

PHOENIX - Rep. Richard Renzi, R-Ariz., was indicted on charges of fraud, extortion and money laundering in an Arizona land deal, the Justice Department said Friday. Also named in the 35-count indictment were James W. Sandlin, Sherman, Texas, a real estate investor and Renzi's business associate, and Andrew Beardall, Rockville, Md., another Renzi business associate, the department said in a news release. The indictment charged Renzi and Sandlin with 27 counts -- including wire fraud, extortion and money laundering and conspiracies to commit the acts -- based on Renzi's involvement in the sale of Sandlin's property to a participant in a federal land exchange proposal. The indictment charged Renzi and Sandlin used the alleged proceeds from the illegal activities for their personal and business use. The remaining charges against Renzi and Beardall involve violations of insurance laws. "Among the allegations contained in the indictment, Congressman Renzi misused his public office by forcing a land sale that would financially benefit himself and a business associate, and in so doing, he betrayed the trust of the citizens of Arizona," U.S. Attorney Diane J. Humetewa said. Renzi, who has announced he wouldn't seek re-election, is to be arraigned in Tucson March 6.

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