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Saturday, May 25, 2002

**Late Updated**

## What's the Buzz? Operator jailed in bank scheme

Tristate investors stung in a failed investment scheme might get some satisfaction from the news that a suspect in one of the schemes has been jailed by a federal judge.

Gary J. Bentz was jailed in Marion County, Ind., on civil contempt charges Thursday for failing to explain why he improperly spent money.

The judge said the Loveland resident "deliberately and willfully" violated a February 2001 court order freezing assets stemming from the investment debacle.

After Mr. Bentz failed to explain why he didn't repay \$142,656, U.S. District Judge David Hamilton signed an order and U.S. marshals whisked Mr. Bentz away to jail. He will get another chance to explain his actions in a Thursday court hearing.

Mr. Bentz and Pierce Township resident John Brinker, operators of Wellington Bank & Trust, are the target of an FBI criminal probe.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission already has charged Wellington with selling unregistered securities.

Most of the almost \$20 million that Wellington raised from investors is gone.

So far, investors have had little luck recovering the losses.

—Ken Alltucker

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