



Defense requests change of venue for federal Philpot trial

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HAMMOND | Defense attorneys have asked the federal courts to move the Lake County coroner's public corruption case to Illinois from Indiana.

Coroner Thomas Philpot was charged with three counts of mail fraud and two counts of theft from a federally funded program in an indictment that was handed down in September.

Philpot is scheduled to face a jury in U.S. District Court in Hammond the week of July 9 on charges he illegally enriched himself from federal grants between 2004 and 2009, when he was county clerk.

His attorneys say pretrial publicity about Philpot's case has tainted the local jury pool, according to a motion filed late Monday night.

Media reports covering the indictment and the background information leading up to the indictment have sparked community outrage, the motion states.

Attorneys also have turned to community comments in the media's online forums to say the jury pool has been tainted, records state.

The motion claims moving the trial from the Northern District of Indiana to the Northern District of Illinois would allow for jury selection in a place not so permeated by publicity.

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