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**3 charged in license probe;**

**Feds: Repeat DUIs put back on road**

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Staff reporters

Two former secretary of state workers under George Ryan, including one with close ties to Ryan's chief of staff, have been charged along with a Schaumburg builder in the expanding federal bribes-for-licenses probe, authorities said Thursday.

For the first time, federal prosecutors are alleging that Ryan employees put chronic drunken drivers back on the road and took kickbacks for remodeling jobs at state offices.

Authorities also said dozens of illegal immigrants were given licenses out of the Elgin driver's license facility, the investigation of which allegedly was hindered by former Ryan inspector general Dean Bauer, who has since pleaded guilty.

Named in the charges Thursday was Larry Hall, 44, of Wheaton, who was the property manager for the 28 driver's license facilities in the Chicago area from 1993 to 1999 and who was recommended for his job through his longtime friend Scott Fawell. Fawell, who was chief of staff for Ryan when he was secretary of state, hasn't been charged with any wrongdoing.

Hall is expected to provide important information to the federal government in its ongoing probe of questionable leases given out to landlords who contributed heavily to Gov. Ryan when he was secretary of state.

"It was widely known he was Scott's guy," said a source familiar with the relationship. Hall "was a guy most people would shy away from arguing with because you'd get crossways with him, and he'd pick up the phone and call Fawell."

Hall, charged with two counts of mail fraud, is expected to plead guilty in the case. He's accused of taking $ 3,300 in kickbacks from a Schaumburg contractor after steering him remodeling work for driver's license facilities in South Holland and Melrose Park in 1997. Also charged was the contractor, Jerry DiSalvo, 56, of Addison. DiSalvo, owner of B & J Construction, was charged with mail fraud for allegedly making more than $ 36,000 in profits on the jobs.

U.S. Attorney Scott Lassar declined Thursday to describe Hall's cooperation. Hall didn't have the power to approve the questionable leases, but he has important knowledge about how those decisions were made, sources said.

Among the leases Hall managed was one at a commercial driver's license facility in South Holland that was leased from Ryan friend and contributor Harry Klein, who has hosted Ryan at his Jamaica home.

Hall's cooperation already has paid off for prosecutors, who charged a former employee at the Elgin facility, John Spahn, 54, of Hampshire with taking bribes from Hall to give fake driver's licenses to several drivers who had their licenses suspended or revoked for past DUI convictions. So far, six drivers have been identified whose licenses will be pulled, a secretary of state's office spokeswoman said Thursday.

Spahn, who's charged with taking bribes of up to $ 1,500 between 1995 and 1997, also routinely helped dozens of illegal immigrants get licenses, authorities allege.

At a news conference Thursday, Lassar, in his most vocal statements yet, praised the ongoing Operation Safe Road investigation as one of the most important in the Chicago area in the last two decades and expressed surprise at what it continues to uncover.

"There haven't been many rocks we've turned over where we haven't found something," Lassar said.