A bill of information and plea agreements were filed today in U.S. District Court charging two men with embezzling from the Foothills Regional Airport, announced Anne M. Tompkins, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. U.S. Attorney Tompkins is joined in making today's announcement by Chris Briese, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Charlotte Division. Alex Dean Nelson, 49, of Lenoir, N.C., was the Administrator of the Foothills Regional Airport. According to the charging document, Nelson was the top official for the Airport, responsible for overseeing its financial and operational affairs. Bradley Dale Adkins, 36, of Hickory, N.C., was the Operations Manager for the Airport. According to the filed court documents, Nelson schemed to use his access and public authority to steal and embezzle over $130,000 from the Airport and its customers in order to fund his personal lifestyle, including purchases of a Key West vacation timeshare, a "Party Barge" pontoon boat, the building of a new in-ground pool at Nelson's residence, and cars. Court documents show that Nelson and Adkins diverted checks made out to the Airport into accounts controlled by the pair, and Nelson stole money that Airport customers entrusted Nelson to pay to the Airport for things like airplane and hangar rent, services, and fuel by diverting their checks to Adkins' account, and by running their payments through a personal credit card machine that Nelson had hooked up. Nelson and Adkins also defrauded the Airport and the Foothills Regional Airport Authority by awarding no-work contracts and contracts for services at grossly inflated prices. Among other things, Nelson also stole approximately 1,000 gallons of fuel from the Airport to heat a personal martial arts studio that Nelson owned. The bill of information charges Nelson and Adkins with one count of engaging in a public corruption conspiracy. Count two charges Nelson and Adkins with embezzlement from the Airport, and organization receiving benefits in excess of $10,000 in Federal Assistance. Count three charges Nelson with money laundering. According to the plea agreements filed today, both men have agreed to plead guilty to all charges contained in the charging document. Count one carries a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison and a $250,000 fine. Count two carries a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a $250,000, and count three carries a statutory sentence of 20 years in prison, a $250,000 fine or twice the amount of criminally derived proceeds. The defendants' initial appearances and plea hearings will be scheduled by the U.S. District Court. The investigation is handled by FBI.