

Contact: Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.  
Phone: 614.645.6904  
Email: [rcpfeiffer@columbus.gov](mailto:rcpfeiffer@columbus.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Owners of Columbus Inn & Suites Found Guilty of Maintaining Public Nuisance

*Judge orders premises to be boarded up for one year*

**COLUMBUS, OH**—Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. announced today that the City of Columbus received favorable judgment in its complaint against Mohammad and Umtal Ashraf, husband and wife owners of *Columbus Inn and Suites*.

The hotel, located near the I-71 and S.R. 161 interchange in north Columbus, had been fraught with significant problems since at least 2011. The State Fire Marshall found multiple fire code violations during at least 50 visits between 2011 and 2013. The Columbus Division of Police were dispatched 497 times to the premises between January 1, 2012 and March 19, 2013 for an array of alleged illegal activity, including prostitution and illicit drug sales.

**“We are pleased that the judge considered the facts of our case and declared this property a public nuisance,” said City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. “I especially want to thank the Columbus Division of Police and the State Fire Marshall for gathering and presenting the significant evidence we used to prove our case.”**

The Division of Police conducted several covert investigations last year that resulted in the arrest and conviction of numerous individuals for prostitution-related offenses. Covert operations also uncovered evidence of extensive drug dealing, including several under-cover purchases of heroin and crack cocaine.

In order to secure closure of the hotel, the City Attorney’s office had to prove the Ashrafs were guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that they, as owners of the premises, “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

The court ruling found that the Ashrafs were notified of the nuisance activities through several different methods and did “absolutely nothing” to abate the problems.

In addition to ordering the hotel closed for a year, the court issued a permanent injunction against the property, the Ashrafs, and any subsequent owners in the future. The Ashrafs also are enjoined from maintaining a public nuisance at any of the other properties they own in Franklin County.

Copies of the court decision and entry are attached.