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HAULERS PLEAD NO CONTEST

Two trash hauling firms and four employees of one of the companies have pleaded no contest to charges they plotted to eliminate competition and control prices in an antitrust case.

Pleading no contest in Los Angeles Municipal Court on Monday to one count of conspiracy against trade were Athens Disposal, based in the City of Industry; Ronald Arakelian Sr., the company president; his son, Ronald Arakelian Jr., an officer; Alan W. Lockwood, general manager; and Vincent Bruno, sales manager.

Also pleading no contest was a second, smaller trash hauling firm, PJB Disposal, based in Alhambra.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Martin Herscovitz said that under the terms of a plea bargain, Athens will pay a \$500,000 fine when sentenced Jan. 26. Ronald Arakelian Sr. will pay a \$20,000 fine and may have to serve up to 120 days in jail. The other three officers will pay \$10,000 fines and may serve up to 90 days behind bars.

PJB Disposal will pay a \$2,000 fine, Herscovitz said.

The prosecutor said the defendants plotted to eliminate competition and control prices in Southern California's multimillion-dollar commercial trash hauling industry.

The conspiracy included an agreement not to take away each other's customers and to rig bids for trash collection services, Herscovitz said.