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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2008

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MAJOR MANATEE DRUG DEALER SENTENCED

Tampa, Florida - United States District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich today sentenced Miguel Rendon, age 74, of Manatee County, to 19 years and seven months' imprisonment and a \$100,000.00 fine for his longstanding role in a drug trafficking organization involved in the importation of large scale shipments of cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana from Texas to Manatee County. He was found guilty on May 21, 2008, following a two-week jury trial on charges of conspiracy to distribute, and to possess with the intent to distribute, five kilograms or more of cocaine, five hundred grams or more of methamphetamine, and one thousand kilograms or more of marijuana. In addition to sentencing Rendon to a lengthy term of incarceration, Judge Kovachevich also entered a forfeiture money judgment against Rendon in the amount of \$3.3 million, as well as an Order forfeiting Rendon's interest in seven properties collectively valued in excess of \$1million.

According to the testimony and evidence presented at Rendon's trial, between the late 1990's and Spring 2006, Rendon served as a high-level member of the conspiracy. He was in charge of performing a number of valuable functions for the organization. These functions included distributing kilogram quantities of cocaine and pound quantities of both methamphetamine and marijuana, investing in shipments of these drugs, providing high-interest loans to finance the organization's drug operation, storing large amounts of drug

proceeds for the conspiracy, and renting over a half dozen of his properties located throughout Manatee County to members of the organization for their illicit use, sometimes in exchange for drug payments.

The prosecution of Rendon was the result of a joint investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. To date, the investigation has resulted in the seizure of more than five hundred kilograms of cocaine, and over a million dollars in drug proceeds. The investigation has also led to the conviction of approximately thirty defendants in the Middle District of Florida, as well as the conviction of an additional number of defendants in the Southern District of Texas.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher P. Tuite.
