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Man from St. David Pleads Guilty to Federal Drug Charges

Bangor, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced that **Ben Dionne**, 29, of St. David, Maine, pleaded guilty on January 5, 2009, in U.S. District Court in Bangor, Maine, to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana. Dionne faces a possible sentence of up to 10 years imprisonment, and a fine of up to \$4 million, or both. Dionne also pleaded guilty to failure to appear. On that charge, Dionne faces a possible sentence of up to 5 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

In September 2006, Dionne was charged with conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute marijuana. Following his arrest on the charge he was released on bail. Although having been ordered to stay at home, Dionne was not at home the next day when a U.S. Probation Officer arrived there for a home visit. After several more attempts to contact Dionne had been made, a bail review hearing was scheduled, but Dionne failed to appear. It was learned that Dionne had fled to Canada. The defendant was charged with failure to appear and extradited back to the United States to face the conspiracy charge and the failure to appear charge.

According to court records, from 2003 to sometime in 2006, Dionne conspired with Michael Pelletier and others to possess with intent to distribute marijuana, and to distribute marijuana. The marijuana was smuggled across the St. John River into the U.S. from Canada by individuals working for Pelletier. Bulk quantities of marijuana would then be transported to Pelletier's customers.

As one of Pelletier's customers, Dionne took delivery of marijuana from a person working for Pelletier. In addition, Dionne also sometimes delivered multi-pound quantities of marijuana for Pelletier. Dionne also delivered cash proceeds from the sale of marijuana to Pelletier at his home in St. David.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency. United States Attorney Silsby also recognized the contributions of the Maine State Police, the Aroostook County Sheriff's Office, and the Madawaska Maine Police Department to the investigation.

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