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**POLICE CHIEF OF BOYCE, LA.
CONVICTED ON FEDERAL FIREARMS CHARGES**

Alexandria, Louisiana: The Chief of Police of Boyce, Louisiana was convicted late Wednesday by a federal jury of illegally taking personal possession of prohibited weapons that were seized from individuals by his police department, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced. CLAUDE E. WILLIAMS, 52, of Boyce, Louisiana, was convicted of three counts of possessing unregistered firearms after a three-day trial in United States District Court in Alexandria. WILLIAMS was acquitted on two counts of making false statements to federal law enforcement agents.

As part of a joint investigations by the FBI, ATF and the Rapides Parish District Attorney's Office, law enforcement authorities executed a search warrant in September 2007 at the Boyce Police Department, and later searched Williams' home and vehicle. The FBI seized an M-16 rifle from Williams' residence and a sawed-off rifle and sawed-off shotgun from his vehicle. The M-16 rifle qualifies as a machine gun under federal law. All three weapons were originally seized during criminal investigations by the Boyce Police Department. All three are prohibited weapons for personal use unless they are registered under federal law.

WILLIAMS also faces state charges of Malfeasance in Office. Trial on those charges is scheduled for December 15, 2008 in Alexandria.

WILLIAMS is scheduled for sentencing on March 19, 2009. He faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both, on each firearm count. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

U. S. Attorney Donald Washington stated: “We are thankful and always grateful for the selfless service given to us by most police officers. To maintain public respect for and confidence in law enforcement officers, we must demand that police officers diligently obey the law. This Chief of Police did not obey the law and must now face the consequences of not doing so.”

This case was investigated by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Shreveport Field Office, Special Agent John Pias, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Alexandria Resident Agency, Special Agent Randy Deaton, in conjunction with the Rapides Parish Sheriff’s Office and was prosecuted by Assistant U. S. Attorney James G. Cowles.

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