



Department of Justice

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VALLEY SPRINGS MAN INDICTED FOR ILLEGAL FIREARMS POSSESSION AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

FRESNO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned an indictment today against BRANDON RUSSELL STURGILL, 31, of Valley Springs, Calif., for possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute it and for being a felon in possession of firearms.

This case is the result of a joint investigation by Calaveras County Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It is part of the Project SAFE Neighborhoods initiative, a joint effort between federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities to reduce firearms and violent crimes.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Kimberly A. Sanchez, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment resulted from STURGILL's arrest on December 1, 2008 after a traffic stop in which officers recovered more than 50 grams of methamphetamine and a firearm. Another firearm was recovered from the defendant's residence pursuant to a search warrant.

"Armed drug dealers are not welcome in our communities. ATF and the Calaveras County Sheriff's Department are committed to reducing violent crime and keeping our neighborhoods safe," said ATF Special Agent-in-Charge Stephen C. Herkins.

"I appreciate the efforts of federal law enforcement agencies working with our local agencies to take this case to the federal level. Methamphetamine distribution and usage in Calaveras County impacts all of our citizens in the county," stated Calaveras County Sheriff Dennis Downum. "We in the law enforcement community see the ties between drugs and other crimes, such as theft and violence. I think this sends a clear message that if individuals chose to engage in this type of illicit activity, we intend to use all resources available to remove them from our community."

If convicted, STURGILL faces a maximum sentence of 50 years in prison. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges in the indictment are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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