



# ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
St. Paul Field Division

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## **ATF AGENT IN NORTH DAKOTA SELECTED FOR TOP COP AWARD**

FARGO, N.D. – Special Agent Jay McCrary with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in Fargo has been selected as an Honorable Mention winner representing the State of North Dakota for the Top Cop Award presented by the National Association of Police Organizations.

McCrary was nominated for the award based on his work, in partnership with the West Fargo, N.D., Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) on an Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) case entitled Operation Scorched Earth that dismantled a violent narcotics trafficking organization.

The case began in October 2004 with an investigation into Kelly McCracken and associates. McCracken, who had a previous felony conviction, was the local head of a methamphetamine distribution ring. The ring used kidnappings, assaults with firearms and other crimes of violence to carry out their narcotics conspiracy. A search warrant served at McCracken's residence revealed in excess of 500 grams of a high purity form of methamphetamine known as "ice." Additional investigation revealed other prohibited persons possessing and using firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking activities and that multiple pounds of methamphetamine had been distributed in eastern North Dakota and Western Minnesota by McCracken's organization.

There were a total of 26 defendants in the case. Twenty four of them pleaded guilty to federal firearms and narcotics violations. The remaining two defendants went to trial, were found guilty on all charges and due to previous convictions both received life sentences. The other defendants in the case received prison sentences ranging from a year and six months to 26 years and nine months.

"Special Agent McCrary's abilities as a law enforcement officer and his leadership skills in managing this multi-agency investigation are a perfect example of the kind of work being done in this country every day at every level of law enforcement," said Bernard J. Zapor, Special Agent in Charge of ATF's St. Paul Field Division. "I commend him for his exemplary work on this case."

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The National Organization of Police Organizations has an independent awards committee that chooses one winning team from each state, U.S. territory and the District of Columbia. From those cases the top 10 become Top Cops and the remaining are Honorable Mention Award winners. The awards will be presented May 12 at a ceremony during National Police Week in Washington, D.C.

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