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## PRESS RELEASE

### PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS NETS MOLINO COUPLE HEFTY PRISON SENTENCES

**For Immediate Release - September 4, 2003**

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Pensacola, Florida - Greg Miller, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida and Ralph C. Ostrowski, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Tampa Field Division announced today that Steven Ray STOKES, age 38 and Carrie Denise STOKES, age 30, were sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Roger Vinson. Steven STOKES was sentenced as an Armed Career Criminal to serve 204 months (17 years) in federal prison, followed by 5 years supervised release. Carri STOKES was sentenced to 102 months (8 1/2 years) in federal prison, followed by 4 years supervised release. Additionally, both were required to forfeit their interests in a 40 acre parcel of land in northern Escambia County.

On January 23, 2003, a federal search warrant was served at the residence of Steven STOKES and Carri STOKES. At the time of the search warrant, Steven STOKES was not located and remained at large until his arrest in Long Beach, CA, on March 3, 2003.

Steven STOKES has an extensive felony criminal conviction record to include a 1986 conviction for grand larceny of motor vehicle, a 1987 conviction for possession of stolen vehicle and possession of vehicle with altered serial number, a 1994 conviction for drug possession and distribution, a 1996 felony fleeing and eluding a law enforcement officer conviction and numerous misdemeanor convictions.

On February 19, 2003, Steven STOKES was indicted by a federal grand jury in the Northern District of Florida for one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute controlled substances, one count of possessing firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking, and one count of being a felon in possession of firearms. On March 21, 2003, Carri STOKES was also indicted charging her with the drug conspiracy and with harboring a fugitive, her husband. On May 8, 2003, Steven STOKES pled guilty as charged in the indictment and Carri STOKES pled guilty to conspiracy count.

This prosecution was pursued as part of a joint federal-state-local investigation with the Escambia County Sheriff's Office, FDLE, DEA and U. S. Customs as an initiative in support of the national gun violence reduction program known as Project Safe Neighborhoods. USA Miller had special praise for Special Agent Craig Saier of ATF and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Swaim

for their efforts in bringing this pair to justice.