



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Grand Rapids, Michigan** – February 2, 2005 – United States Attorney Margaret M. Chiara, Special Agent in Charge Valerie J. Goddard of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and Chief Harry A. Layman of the Decatur Police Department announced that, on Friday, January 28, 2005, United States District Judge David W. McKeague sentenced Cody Eyer, of Decatur, Michigan, to thirty months in prison for being in possession of an unregistered firearm.

The case was prosecuted under the United States Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods," a program to reduce gun-related violent crime, and it stemmed from an incident on April 30, 2004, in Van Buren County.

On April 30, 2004, Decatur Police Department (DPD) Deputy Chief Dahlquist and Michigan State Trooper Kassuba went to Cory Eyer's residence in Decatur, Michigan, after receiving information from an informant that Mr. Eyer was selling methamphetamine. Mr. Eyer gave consent to the officers to search his residence and vehicle. Inside the residence, the officers found six firearms, including a short-barreled Mossberg shotgun. Mr. Eyer admitted to the police that he had cut off part of the barrel of the shotgun. When officers searched Mr. Eyer, they found a cigarette pack in his shirt pocket containing five small bags of methamphetamine. The residence appeared to have been used as a methamphetamine lab. Mr. Eyer was indicted by a federal grand jury for being in possession of an unregistered firearm (the short-barreled shotgun) and possession of methamphetamine. The methamphetamine charge was dismissed pursuant to a plea agreement.

Special Agent in Charge Valerie Goddard stated: "Our partnership with the Decatur Police Department has resulted in the 2 ½ year federal sentence for the admitted possession of an illegal, short-barreled shotgun. Weapons are altered for easy concealment; there's only one reason to do that with long guns and that is so law enforcement can't detect them." She added: "The federal firearms laws are meant to protect the public from those individuals who have proven, through their own actions, that they cannot own or possess a firearm responsibly."

Chief Laymen stated: “This was our first case since Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) was introduced to southwestern Michigan law enforcement agencies, and I am very pleased with the way this particular case was handled. This is just a fantastic tool in our fight to get felons and drug dealers who possess firearms off the streets and behind bars where they belong. PSN has formed a positive bond between local law enforcement agencies and the United States Department of Justice in our effort to let the bad guys know that ‘we’re coming after ya.’”

The case was investigated by the Decatur Police Department and the Michigan State Police, along with ATF. This case is a culmination of cooperative efforts between those agencies, the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office, and the United States Attorney's Office. Ms. Chiara praised the investigative work of the Decatur Police Department and ATF.

Assistant United States Attorney Michael L. Schipper prosecuted this case for the United States.

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