



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CASS COUNTY FIREWORKS DEALER INDICTED FOR SELLING ILLEGAL FIREWORKS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a fireworks dealer has been indicted by a federal grand jury for selling explosives to a person who did not have a license.

Joe F. Gallegher, 62, of Maryville, Kan., was charged in a single-count indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City on June 30, 2004. That indictment was unsealed and made public today upon **Gallegher's** arrest and initial appearance in court. **Gallegher** operates Crazy Joe's fireworks stand in Cass County, Mo.

The federal indictment alleges that, between June 20, 2003, and July 4, 2003, **Gallegher** distributed 100 M-80 explosives, 20 three-inch aerial salute rockets, and 60 four-inch aerial salute rockets to a person who was not a licensee. Under federal law, Graves explained, a federal license must be obtained before any person can buy or sell such explosives.

Mark James, Special Agent in Charge of the Kansas City Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), warned that such fireworks are intended for use by those who are federally licensed to discharge them for public displays.

“This time of year we see numerous serious injuries occur as the result of careless use of legal and illegal fireworks,” James said. “These injuries usually occur to people who are not familiar with the hazards of using illegal fireworks, such as M-80s, M-1000s and aerial salutes.”

Graves cautioned that the charge contained in the indictment is simply an accusation, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charge must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David A. Barnes. It was

investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow