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**FORMER POLICE CHIEF OF VIDALIA, LOUISIANA PLEADS
GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS TO FEDERAL AGENTS**

False Statements Made in Connection with Firearms Investigation

Shreveport, La.: Ronnie G. "Tapper" Hendricks, former Chief of Police of Vidalia, La., pleaded guilty today to making false statements to federal law enforcement agents in the course of an investigation into the use and disposition of certain firearms at the Vidalia Police Department. The plea was entered in federal court in Alexandria, La. before U.S. District Judge Dee Drell.

According to the testimony of FBI Special Agent Randy Deaton at today's hearing, earlier this year FBI and ATF agents were investigating Hendricks for possible violations of federal firearms laws, specifically, whether Hendricks had transferred a fully-automatic machine gun owned by the Vidalia Police Department to the custody of an individual or individuals for non-law enforcement use at the Rifle Point Hunting Club, a private hunting club in Ferriday, Louisiana. The federal agents were also investigating whether Hendricks had removed certain firearms from the custody of the Vidalia Police Department Evidence Room and subsequently gave those firearms to friends and acquaintances as gifts.

As part of the investigation, federal agents interviewed Hendricks last February. Special Agent Deaton testified that Hendricks made three material false statements during the interview: 1) Hendricks denied transferring a fully automatic machine gun owned by the Vidalia Police Department to the custody of an individual or individuals at the Rifle Point Hunting Club, when in truth and in fact he had done so for use by members and guests of the club; 2) Hendricks falsely claimed that one of the individuals to whom custody of the machine gun was transferred was a Reserve Police Officer of the Vidalia Police Department whom he had sworn in at an unofficial ceremony to which there were no witnesses, when in truth and in fact there was no such ceremony and the individual is not a Reserve Police Officer; and 3) Hendricks falsely claimed that the individual described above signed an oath of office form related to the alleged swearing in prior to receiving the machine gun, when in truth and in fact the individual had never signed such an oath of office form.

Hendricks faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Sentencing is scheduled for February 25, 2011.

This case was investigated jointly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and is being prosecuted by William J. Flanagan, Counsel to the United States Attorney, and Nicole O. Snyder, Assistant United States Attorney.

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