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**ROCKFORD MAN INDICTED BY FEDERAL GRAND JURY AS
“ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL” ILLEGALLY POSSESSING FIREARMS**

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; LARRY FORD, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); PAUL A. LOGLI, Winnebago County State’s Attorney; and STEVEN PUGH, Chief of the Rockford Police Department, today made the following announcement:

A federal grand jury in Rockford today indicted **KEVIN KIRKWOOD**, 48 (DOB: 8/14/1955), who formerly resided at 4120 Auburn Street, #111, Rockford, Illinois, for being an “armed career criminal” illegally possessing two firearms. According to the indictment, Kirkwood, knowingly possessed a Colt .45 caliber handgun and a Davis Industries .380 caliber handgun when arrested by the Rockford Police Department on November 6, 2003. Kirkwood has been in custody since the time of his arrest.

If convicted of the charge, Kirkwood would be sentenced as an “armed career criminal” under a federal firearm law mandating non-paroleable prison sentences of at least 15 years for felons with extensive records of prior criminal convictions who illegally possess guns. The actual sentence would be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

First charged by the Winnebago County States Attorney’s Office under state law, Kirkwood was transferred to federal court where he was charged under tough federal firearms laws as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an intensive, cooperative effort between local, state, and federal law enforcement to attack gun crimes. The cornerstone of the program is that every state defendant with a gun will be reviewed for possible federal prosecution in order to target the harshest penalties for the worst offenders. Additional information about Project Safe Neighborhoods may be found at www.psn.gov.

The case was investigated by the Rockford Office of the ATF, and the Rockford Police Department. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

Members of the public are reminded that a criminal indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial at which time the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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