



Department of Justice

United States Attorney John W. Vaudreuil
Western District of Wisconsin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 4, 2011
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/WIW

CONTACT: ROBERT A. ANDERSON
PHONE: (608) 264-5158
TTY: (608) 264-5006

**10th MAN SENTENCED IN CONNECTION WITH
INVESTIGATIONS OF METHAMPHETAMINE MANUFACTURE
IN LINCOLN COUNTY**

Three Additional Federal Indictments Unsealed

Madison, Wis. - John W. Vaudreuil, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Christopher D. Schmeltzer, 40, Merrill, Wis., was sentenced today by Chief U.S. District Judge William M. Conley to 27 months in prison, to be followed by a three-year period of supervised release, for conspiring to possess pseudoephedrine with the intent to manufacture methamphetamine. Schmeltzer acted in this conspiracy from March 2009 to January 2010.

Schmeltzer was also ordered to pay \$3,376 in restitution for clean up costs of toxic methamphetamine manufacture materials at a property in Lincoln County. Federal prison sentences are served without the possibility of parole.

The prosecution of Schmeltzer was the result of an extensive and ongoing investigation conducted by the Merrill Police Department, Lincoln County Sheriff's Department, and Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation. To date, the cooperative state, local and federal investigation has resulted in the conviction of ten people involved in six separate methamphetamine cooking operations during 2009.

In addition, three additional indictments were unsealed in January, charging another six men with conspiring to manufacture methamphetamine and obtain precursor ingredients for the manufacture of the drug during active methamphetamine cooking operations ranging from the fall of 2008 through the end of 2009. These men were Bernard W. Robertson, 41, Tomahawk, Wis.; Michael B. Ritchie, 40, Merrill; Charles "Mike" Bear, 38, Schofield, Wis.; Larry G. Dole, 32, Merrill; Jody R. Simon, 39, Merrill; and Antonio P. Lance, 30, Merrill.

Set forth below are the defendants who have previously been convicted and sentenced in federal court:

| Name | Crime of Conviction | Sentence Imposed |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Shawn Ably | conspiracy to possess pseudoephedrine with intent to manufacture methamphetamine | 6 years |
| Jake Barttelt | manufacture of methamphetamine | 5 ½ years |
| Daniel Bohman | manufacture of methamphetamine | 4 years |
| Joshua Graham | conspiracy to possess pseudoephedrine with intent to manufacture methamphetamine | 10 years |
| Chuck Groff | conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine | 12 years |
| Paul Rasmussen | attempted manufacture of methamphetamine | 5 years |
| David Bienfang | conspiracy to possess pseudoephedrine with intent to manufacture methamphetamine | 4 ½ years |
| Hal "Casey" Mulford | conspiracy to possess pseudoephedrine with intent to manufacture methamphetamine | 3½ years |
| Richard Koput | conspiracy to possess pseudoephedrine with intent to manufacture methamphetamine | 11 years |

Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert A. Anderson is handling the prosecution of these cases.

###