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OHIO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Russell Nelson, 48, of Zanesville, Ohio, pleaded guilty yesterday before United States District Judge Robert C. Chambers, to federal drug charges. Nelson admitted that from in or about 2007 until September of 2009, he conspired with known individuals to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana. The defendant further admitted to allowing an associate to use a large garage that he owned in Zanesville, Ohio, to be used as an off-loading facility for the receipt and distribution of large amounts of marijuana. As part of the drug conspiracy, Nelson allowed multi-pound quantities of marijuana to be brought to his garage and unloaded from a transporting vehicle. The defendant admitted that a minimum of five shipments, averaging in weight from approximately 500 pounds of marijuana per shipment with the exception of one shipment which weighed 3000 pounds, were received at his Zanesville garage. Once the marijuana was unloaded, other associates would arrive at the garage and pick up large quantities of marijuana for further distribution. In return for the use of his garage, Nelson admitted to receiving cash payments and marijuana from his associate.

Nelson faces up to 40 years in prison and a \$5 million fine when he is sentenced on September 19, 2011.

The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Putnam County Sheriff's Office conducted the investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Monica Dillon is in charge of the prosecution.

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ARIZONA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Jay Van Meneen, 33, of Phoenix, Arizona, pleaded guilty yesterday before United States District Judge Robert C. Chambers, to aiding and abetting the possession with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana. The defendant knowingly possessed with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana. The defendant further admitted that he agreed to transport a large quantity of marijuana to a confidential source in Putnam County, West Virginia, on behalf of a drug trafficking organization operating out of Arizona and Mexico. Meneen drove his vehicle with a Haulmark box trailer attached, from Arizona to West Virginia, for the purpose of delivering marijuana to the confidential source for distribution. The defendant admitted to knowing that the marijuana was contained in a false wall inside the box trailer. On March 5, 2010, officers conducted a traffic stop of the defendant's vehicle in Putnam County and a subsequent search of the vehicle revealed approximately 310.3 kilograms of marijuana.

Meneen faces up to 40 years in prison and a \$5 million fine when he is sentenced on September 19, 2011.

The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Putnam County Sheriff's Office conducted the investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Monica Dillon is in charge of the prosecution.

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