

**U.S. Department of Justice**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grand Rapids, Michigan – May 1, 2007 – United States Attorney Charles R. Gross announced that Ronald Darrick Heighton, age 36, of Plainwell, Michigan, was sentenced today to five years in prison. The Honorable Robert Holmes Bell, Chief United States District Judge, presided over the sentencing hearing.

Mr. Heighton pled guilty on January 23, 2007, to possessing equipment and chemicals with intent to manufacture methamphetamine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 843(a)(6); attempting to manufacture methamphetamine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1); and, being a convicted felon in possession of five firearms, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g).

Mr. Heighton was indicted by a federal grand jury on September 13, 2006, following the search of his residence, where officers recovered five firearms, including an AK-47-style semiautomatic rifle; drug paraphernalia; assorted ammunition; a surveillance camera; and night vision goggles. The officers also found various items consistent with the manufacture of methamphetamine, such as drain cleaner, glass jars, hot plates, gas mask, coffee filters, hoses, cans of camp fuel, strainers, gloves, empty pseudoephedrine boxes and blister packs, and lithium battery peelings.

In addition to the sixty-month term of imprisonment, Judge Bell ordered Mr. Heighton to

pay restitution in the amount of \$4,020.00 for the cleanup costs of disposing of the hazardous materials found in Mr. Heighton's residence. Judge Bell also ordered Mr. Heighton to serve a three-year period of supervised release following his prison term.

Mr. Gross commended the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the West Michigan Enforcement Team (WEMET), and the Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team (KVET) for their work in the case. Their joint investigation was undertaken as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative. This case was prosecuted on behalf of the United States of America by Assistant United States Attorney Elisa Castrolugo.

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