



# Department of Justice

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District of North Dakota

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## **Belcourt Man Sentenced for Sting Operation Gun & Drug Charges**

**MINOT** - United States Attorney Drew H. Wrigley announced that on August 27, 2007, **Daniel R. Belgarde**, 40, Belcourt, North Dakota, was sentenced before United States District Court Chief Judge Daniel L. Hovland in a case arising from a 2005-06 sting operation to target illegal gun and drug sales in Rolette County.

**Belgarde** pleaded guilty on May 14, 2007, to engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license; selling firearms to a person convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence; and distribution of a controlled substance.

**Belgarde**, who referred to himself as "The Gun Man," and admittedly sold between 500 and 1,000 guns in the Turtle Mountain area over the years, illegally sold 11 firearms to Doc's Thrift Store in Dunseith between December of 2005 and April of 2006. The gun sales were illegal not only because **Belgarde** was engaging in the firearms business without a Federal Firearms License, but also because he sold the guns to a prohibited person who could not possess firearms as a result of a prior misdemeanor domestic violence conviction. **Belgarde** also illegally sold prescription drugs, including those containing hydrocodone, to Doc's Thrift Store on eight occasions between December of 2005 and February of 2006.

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The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and Rolette County Sheriff's Office jointly set-up and ran the sting operation, in which a cooperating individual operated Doc's Thrift Store and purchased illegal firearms and controlled substances from customers. Two other sting operation defendants have been prosecuted in U.S. District Court on gun and drug charges. All other cases arising from the Dunseith sting operation are being prosecuted by the Rolette County State's Attorney's Office.

Judge Hovland sentenced **Belgarde** to 30 months' imprisonment to be followed by three years of supervised release. **Belgarde** was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$4,015 to the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation and \$575 to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, to reimburse those agencies for the money they paid **Belgarde** for purchases of 11 firearms and prescription drugs.

U.S. Attorney Wrigley said, "Federal firearms laws are designed to protect the community by keeping firearms out of the hands of drug dealers, felons, domestic abusers, and other criminals. **Belgarde** ignored prior warnings from ATF about the requirements for dealing in firearms, and illegally sold prescription drugs as well. The local, state, and federal agencies are to be commended for working together to stop these dangerous and repeated illegal activities."

Assistant United States Attorney Scott Schneider prosecuted the case.

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