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**DOWAGIAC MAN SENTENCED FOR GUN CRIMES**

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.** – Starling Allen Kennedy, 21, of Dowagiac, has been sentenced to 114 months in prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm and for possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking, U.S. Attorney Charles R. Gross announced today.

On June 11, 2007, based upon information that Kennedy was selling illegal drugs, the Dowagiac police obtained and executed a search warrant at his residence. During the search police found both marijuana and cocaine packaged for sale, along with a .25 caliber pistol. As a previously convicted felon Kennedy was prohibited by state and federal law from possessing any firearms. By possessing a firearm in connection with illegal drug dealing he was subjected to additional penalties. On September 27, 2007, Kennedy was indicted by a federal grand jury of both crimes. He pled guilty on May 12, 2008.

U.S. District Judge Robert Holmes Bell ordered Kennedy to serve 114 months in prison and to pay a \$3,000 fine. Upon completion of his prison term Kennedy will serve five years of supervised release and will be required to perform 300 hours of community service.

U.S. Attorney Gross commended the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and the Dowagiac Police Department for their work in the case. This prosecution was initiated as

part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a combined federal, state and local initiative focused on obtaining significant federal prison sentences for persons with a history of committing gun-related crimes. This case was prosecuted on behalf of the United States of America by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael L. Schipper.

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