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MUSKEGON HEIGHTS MAN RECEIVES 15 YEARS FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN – Xavier Priester, 25, formerly of Muskegon Heights and Ypsilanti Michigan, was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for drug trafficking, Charles R. Gross, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan, announced today. U.S. District Judge Robert J. Jonker also ordered Priester to serve five years of supervision by the federal Probation Office after his release from prison. Priester was remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshal following the pronouncement of sentence.

Priester was arrested on August 18, 2007 after members of the Michigan State Police West Michigan Enforcement Team (WEMET) raided Priester's crack house located at 2221 Manz Street, in Muskegon Heights. Inside, investigators located large amounts of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin and marijuana. WEMET authorities, working in cooperation with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF), presented the case to the Muskegon County Prosecutors Office and the United States Attorneys Office for prosecution. Both prosecutors offices worked together to evaluate the case, and determined that the case would be best handled in the federal system. Federal charges against Priester were filed on December 12, 2007. Priester pled guilty to a federal drug trafficking charge on March 14, 2008 and admitted to running the drug house on Manz Street with the help of other individuals.

U.S. Attorney Gross expressed his appreciation for the high level of cooperation which exists between federal, state and county authorities in connection with the detection and punishment of criminal activity in the Muskegon County area.

Priester is the third person convicted and sentenced in connection with the investigation. Michael Fair is currently serving a sentence of five years in federal prison for assisting Priester, and Ricky Brown is currently serving a sentence of 21 months for lying to a grand jury about his knowledge of Priester's activities at 2221 Manz. Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy VerHey prosecuted the case for the United States.

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