



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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#### **ELDON RESIDENT FORFEITS \$100,000 WORTH OF FIREARMS AS UNLICENSED FIREARMS DEALER**

U.S. Attorney Matthew G. Whitaker announces that Bela Hummel, 73, of Eldon, IA was ordered on October 24, 2008 by U.S. District Court Judge Ronald Longstaff to forfeit over \$100,000 worth of firearms, over 700 weapons, as part of his sentence for being an unlicensed firearms dealer.

The case is believed to be one of the largest firearm forfeitures in the history of the Southern District of Iowa.

According to a civil forfeiture opinion issued on October 22, 2008 by Judge Longstaff, Hummel started his unlicensed firearms dealing in approximately 1990, and grew his personal collection of 60 guns into a business inventory of nearly 700 firearms.

The value of the forfeiture, and Mr. Hummel's age, health, and lack of criminal record, were a factor in the court sentencing him to three years of probation, but the court also imposed a requirement that he serve 100 hours of community service in an area related to serving shooting or crime victims. He was also ordered to pay \$100 to the Crime Victims Fund.

In lieu of a fine, Hummel agreed to abandon over 50 firearms that were his personal collection to the federal government, in addition to the forfeiture of his business inventory. As a consequence of his conviction, Mr. Hummel is now prohibited from possessing any firearms in the future.

The case was prosecuted by the U. S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa and was investigated by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.