



U.S. Department of Justice

**Donald A. Davis
United States Attorney
Western District of Michigan**

*The Law Building, 5th Floor
330 Ionia Avenue, N.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503*

*Mailing Address: (616) 456-2404
United States Attorneys Office Facsimile (616) 456-2408
Post Office Box 208
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501-0208*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, NOV. 4, 2008
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/MIW

**CONTACT: MICHAEL L. SCHIPPER
ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY
PHONE: (616) 456-2404**

FELON RECEIVES 10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR POSSESSING A FIREARM

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Ronnie Joe Fritz, 27, of Hart, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm, U.S. Attorney Donald A. Davis announced today. U.S. District Judge Janet T. Neff also ordered Fritz to serve three years of supervision by the Probation Office upon his release from prison. Fritz had pled guilty on May 29, 2008.

On December 31, 2006, Lawton Police stopped a vehicle for expired registration. Fritz, a rear seat passenger fled from the scene leaving a .45 caliber handgun under the seat. Officers searched for Fritz but were unable to find him. After questioning the other passengers of the vehicle it was determined that Fritz was the individual who fled. While in state custody awaiting trial on unrelated charges, Fritz confessed to his possession of the .45 caliber handgun found in the car. Fritz was previously convicted of a felony and was prohibited by state and federal law from possessing any firearms.

U.S. Attorney Davis commended the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Lawton Police Department and the Van Buren County Sheriff for their work on 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 who commit gun-related crimes. This case was prosecuted on behalf of the United States by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael L. Schipper.