

NEWS RELEASE

FROM: CATHERINE L. HANAWAY
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Missouri



555 Independence Cape Girardeau, MO 63703 (573) 334-3736

*For Further Information, Call:
Assistant U. S. Attorney Michael A. Price*

NEW MADRID COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ARSON

December 16, 2008

United States Attorney Catherine L. Hanaway announced today that a New Madrid County man was sentenced to federal prison for arson.

LARRY D. KELLER, (50) a Morehouse, Missouri resident, was sentenced to 60 months in prison on one felony count of Malicious Damage by Fire. Upon release from prison, Keller will be placed on supervised release for three years. Keller was also ordered to pay restitution of \$22,526.15 to AIG Lexington Insurance Company and \$25,000 to Rowe Furniture Company. He appeared before U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel on Tuesday, December 16, 2008 in Cape Girardeau.

Keller had pleaded guilty to the charge on October 20, 2008 of intentionally setting fire to machines and lumber at the Rowe Furniture Company building on Highway 114 located in the City

of Morehouse, County of New Madrid, in the Southeastern Division of the Eastern District of Missouri.

Investigation of the fire scene had revealed five separate points of origin in the main manufacturing building (approximately the size of two and one-half football fields) containing routers, saws, planers, shapers, gluers, conveyors, and piles of lumber used to make wooden frames for furniture.

The Missouri Division of Fire Safety investigator determined the fire to be incendiary.

Investigation by BATFE had revealed Keller as a suspect. Keller had been employed by Rowe Furniture but was terminated approximately two weeks prior to the fire. After being terminated, Keller had returned and made threats to burn Rowe Furniture.

Keller had also told the owner of a local bar that he (Keller) could burn the Rowe building because he knew many places that he could start a fire and that no one could catch him.

The morning of the fire, witnesses observed Keller riding his bicycle across the railroad tracks towards the Rowe Furniture property.

The total amount of the loss was \$47,526.15, and although the company was able to repair and continue to use two of the routers for manufacturing, the Rowe Furniture Company manufacturing plant in Morehouse ultimately closed as a part of a reorganization plan in March of 2007.

Hanaway commended the Missouri Division of Fire Safety, the Morehouse Chief of Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for their efforts to investigate and prosecute this case. Assistant United States Attorney Michael A. Price handled the prosecution for the Government.