NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs ● (816) 426-4220 ● 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 ● Kansas City, MO 64106
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NITRO UPDATE

14 CAMERON-AREA RESIDENTS INDICTED IN TWO METH CONSPIRACIES

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that 14 defendants from the Cameron, Mo., area have been charged in two separate but related federal indictments with participating in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. Several defendants were also charged with illegally possessing firearms. These indictments are the result of a task force investigation by NITRO, the Northwest Missouri Interagency Team Response Operation.

Melissa Sue Trigg, 31, **Paul R. Huffman**, 26, **Caleb Daniel Wheeler**, 19, **Steven McLain Wheeler**, 21, **Steven Ray Wheeler**, 48, **LeAnne Soperla**, also known as LeAnne Wheeler, 47, **Daphne Enloe**, 19, all of Cameron; **Russell Charles Peters**, 47, of Kidder, Mo.; **Christopher Michael Dannar**, 32, of Lake Viking, Mo.; **Kyle David Waltemeyer**, 28, of Winston, Mo.; and **Cody J. Gilreath**, 27, who is in federal custody; were charged in a 19-count indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City on May 20, 2005.

Peters (charged in both indictments), **Juanita A. Pearson**, 46, and **Larry L. Karstens**, 52, both of Gallatin, Mo.; and **Claudell Ann Bruyer**, 33, of Kidder; were charged in a two-count indictment that was also returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City on May 20, 2005.

Both of these indictments were unsealed and made public today upon the arrest and initial court appearance of some of the defendants.

United States v. Trigg, et al

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that each of the co-defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine between Dec. 1, 2001, and

May 20, 2005.

In addition to the conspiracy charge, the following defendants are also charged with separate violations:

Count Two of the federal indictment alleges that **Trigg** was in possession with the intent to distribute five grams or more of actual methamphetamine on May 2, 2005. Count Four of the federal indictment alleges that **Trigg** carried a loaded Glock .40-caliber semi-automatic handgun during and in relation to the drug trafficking crimes alleged in Counts One and Two. Count Nine of the federal indictment alleges that **Trigg** was in possession of a Remington 12-gauge shotgun, a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun, a Glock .40-caliber semi-automatic handgun, a .45-caliber revolver with red laser sights, and a 9 mm "mini M-16" assault rifle, as well as ammunition for those firearms, while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, methamphetamine. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who is an unlawful user, or addicted to, a controlled substance to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition.

Count Three of the federal indictment alleges that **Dannar** was in possession with the intent to distribute five grams or more of actual methamphetamine on May 2, 2005. Count Five of the federal indictment alleges that **Dannar** was in possession of a Lorcin .380-caliber semi-automatic handgun and ammunition for that firearm and a Lorcin .22-caliber semi-automatic pistol in furtherance of the drug trafficking crimes alleged in Counts One and Three. Count Eleven of the federal indictment alleges that **Dannar** was in possession of a Lorcin .380-caliber semi-automatic handgun and ammunition and a Lorcin .22-caliber semi-automatic pistol, while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, methamphetamine. Count Eighteen of the federal indictment alleges that **Dannar** was in possession of a Lorcin .380-caliber semi-automatic handgun and ammunition and a Lorcin .22-caliber semi-automatic pistol between Dec. 1, 2001, and May 3, 2005. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Dannar** has a prior criminal felony conviction.

Count Six of the federal indictment alleges that **Waltemeyer** was in possession of a shotgun, a rifle and a handgun, as well as ammunition for those firearms, in furtherance of the drug trafficking crime alleged in Count One. Count Twelve of the federal indictment alleges that **Waltemeyer** was in possession of a shotgun, a rifle and a handgun, as well as ammunition for those firearms, while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, methamphetamine.

Count Seven of the federal indictment alleges that **Caleb Wheeler** was in possession of a Colt Python .357-caliber magnum revolver and ammunition in furtherance of the drug trafficking crime alleged in Count One. Count Thirteen of the federal indictment alleges that **Caleb Wheeler** was in possession of a Colt Python .357-caliber magnum revolver and ammunition while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, marijuana.

Count Eight of the federal indictment alleges that **Steven M. Wheeler** was in possession of a New England Firearms 12-gauge shotgun and ammunition in furtherance of the drug trafficking crime alleged in Count One. Count Fourteen of the federal indictment alleges that

Steven M. Wheeler was in possession of a New England Firearms Pardner 12-gauge shotgun and ammunition while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, methamphetamine.

Count Fifteen of the federal indictment alleges that **Steven Ray Wheeler** was in possession of a New England Firearms Pardner 12-gauge shotgun, a JC Higgin .22-caliber nine-shot revolver, a Colt Python .357-magnum revolver, and a shotgun, as well as ammunition for those firearms, while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, methamphetamine.

Count Ten the federal indictment alleges that **Huffman** was in possession of a Remington 12-gauge shotgun, a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun, a Glock .40-caliber semi-automatic handgun, a .45-caliber revolver with red laser sights, and a 9 mm "mini M-16" assault rifle, as well as ammunition for those firearms, while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, methamphetamine.

Count Sixteen of the federal indictment alleges that **Soperla** was in possession of a JC Higgin .22-caliber nine-shot revolver while being an unlawful user, or addicted to, marijuana. Count Seventeen of the federal indictment alleges that **Soperla** maintained a place for the purpose of distributing and using methamphetamine and marijuana at 515 N. Nettleton in Cameron from Dec. 1, 2001, to Feb. 25, 2005.

Count Nineteen of the federal indictment is a forfeiture count, which would require **Trigg**, **Huffman**, **Dannar** and **Soperla** to forfeit to the government any property used to commit the alleged violations or any proceeds derived the alleged violations, including the residential property at 515 N. Nettleton in Cameron and at 625 Lake Viking Terr. in Gallatin, which was allegedly used for storing, distributing, and using methamphetamine and marijuana; a 1996 Dodge Avenger registered to **Trigg** and **Huffman**, which was allegedly used in the transportation, storage, distribution, acquisition and use of methamphetamine; $4,247 seized from the residence of **Trigg** and **Huffman** on July 23, 2004; and $430 seized from **Trigg** on May 2, 2005.

United States v. Peters, et al

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that all four defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine between Dec. 1, 2003, and May 20, 2005.

Count Two of the federal indictment is a forfeiture count, which would require the defendants to forfeit to the government any proceeds derived from the alleged violations, including $509 seized from the residence of **Pearson** and **Karstens** on April 19, 2005.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in these indictments are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades. It was investigated by NITRO, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Drug Enforcement

Administation, the North Central Missouri Drug Task Force, the North Missouri Drug Task Force (NOMO), the Cameron, Mo., Police Department, the Daviess County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Caldwell County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Clinton County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Lathrop, Mo., Police Department, the Gallatin, Mo., Police Department, the Daviess County, Mo., Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Dekalb County, Mo., Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Missouri Probation and Parole Office.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow