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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ROCKFORD MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ILLEGALLY POSSESSING A FIREARM**

ROCKFORD — A Rockford, Ill. man pleaded guilty today in federal court before U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Kapala to illegally possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. ROBERT J. GRAY, 34, admitted that on May 8, 2012, having previously been convicted of a felony, he possessed an SKS Norinco semi-automatic rifle with an obliterated serial number and sixteen rounds of ammunition at his home. In addition, Gray had approximately \$372,993 in U.S. currency, six cell phones, a digital scale, a pocket scale, a heat sealer and bags, plastic grocery bags filled with rubber bands, and diamond jewelry at his home.

Gray is scheduled to be sentenced on Aug. 9, 2013, at 10:30 a.m. Gray faces a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years following his release from prison. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The defendant was originally charged in state court, and is now charged in federal court under tough federal firearms laws as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an intensive, cooperative effort between local, state, and federal law enforcement to attack gun crimes. The cornerstone of the program is that every defendant committing an offense involving a gun will be reviewed for possible federal prosecution in order

to obtain the harshest penalties for the worst offenders. Additional information about Project Safe Neighborhoods may be found at: [www.psn.gov](http://www.psn.gov).

The guilty plea was announced by Gary S. Shapiro, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; W. Larry Ford, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives; Cory B. Nelson, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Joseph Bruscato, Winnebago County State's Attorney; and Richard Meyers, Winnebago County Sheriff.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott R. Paccagnini.

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