



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NITRO UPDATE

TWO DAVIESS COUNTY RESIDENTS PLEAD GUILTY TO FEDERAL METH CHARGES

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Daviess County, Mo., resident pleaded guilty in federal court today for conspiring to manufacture methamphetamine. The guilty plea, Graves said, is the result of the work of the NITRO task force.

James E. Hershberger, 25, of Gallatin, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Nanette K. Laughrey this afternoon to conspiring to manufacture methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Hershberger** admitted that between Aug. 17, 2002, and Nov. 2, 2002, he conspired with others to manufacture five grams or more of methamphetamine.

Marvin L. Archer, 32, also of Gallatin, Mo., pleaded guilty to the same charge on April 23, 2003. **Archer** also admitted to his role in the conspiracy to manufacture five grams or more of methamphetamine.

Specifically, the co-defendants admitted that they conspired with others to manufacture 34.4 grams of methamphetamine between Aug. 17, 2002, and Nov. 2, 2002, in Daviess County.

Both defendants were charged in an indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury on Jan. 7, 2003, in Kansas City. The indictment was later unsealed and made public upon the arrests and appearance of several co-defendants.

As a result of pleading guilty, **Hershberger** and **Archer** each face up to 40 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$2 million. Their sentences will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jess Michaelson. The case was investigated by NITRO, the Northwest Missouri Team Response Operation. NITRO is a joint law enforcement effort by the United States Attorney's Office and federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in the 16-county northwest Missouri region. Also involved were the Daviess County Sheriff's Department and the Gallatin, Mo., Police Department.

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

