



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

SPRINGFIELD MAN SENTENCED ON METH, FIREARM CHARGES

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Springfield man was sentenced in federal court today in two separate criminal cases, one charging possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute and one charging him with being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Mark A. Walrath, 41, of Springfield, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this morning to nine years and seven months in federal prison without parole for possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, and to six years and six months in federal prison without parole for being a felon in possession of a firearm. The court ordered those sentences to be served concurrently.

On June 10, 2002, **Walrath** pleaded guilty to both of the federal grand jury indictments. By pleading guilty to the March 28, 2002, federal indictment, **Walrath** admitted that he was in possession of methamphetamine on July 15, 2001, in Greene County, Mo. Graves explained that Greene County Sheriff's Department officers discovered 143.02 grams of methamphetamine buried on the property at 1193 West Farm Road 84 while executing a search warrant. **Walrath** admitted that his intention was to distribute the methamphetamine.

By pleading guilty to the Sept. 20, 2001 federal indictment, **Walrath** admitted that he was in possession of an Accu-Tek .380 caliber handgun on Aug. 30, 2001, in Springfield. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Walrath** has a 1995 criminal felony conviction for burglary in Green County, Mo., a 1991 criminal felony conviction for receiving stolen property in Green County, Mo., a two 1990 criminal felony convictions for receiving stolen property in Greene County, Mo.

Walrath also admitted that, when law enforcement officers tried to stop the vehicle he was driving on Sept. 20, 2001, he refused to stop and led officers on a high-speed chase through

a residential area of central Springfield. During the chase, Graves said, **Walrath** drove recklessly and at a speed in excess of the posted the speed limit. Eventually, **Walrath** stopped his vehicle and was placed under arrest. Officers found the loaded handgun inside the vehicle.

Both cases were prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall D. Eggert. They were investigated by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; the Springfield, Mo., Police Department; the Greene County Sheriff's Department; and the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team (COMET).

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