



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NITRO UPDATE

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS, MO., MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSION OF STOLEN FIREARM

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Excelsior Springs, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to being in possession of a stolen firearm. Graves said the case is the result of the work of the NITRO Task Force. NITRO, the Northwest Missouri Team Response Operation, 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.

Joe P. Wright, 18, of Excelsior Springs, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Chief Judge Dean Whipple this afternoon to an indictment that was returned by a federal grand jury on June 18, 2003.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Wright** admitted that he was in possession of a stolen Bryco Arms .38 caliber pistol on June 2, 2003, knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the firearm was stolen.

Wright was arrested on June 2, 2003, after deputies of the Livingston County Sheriff's Department were dispatched in response to a disturbance call in Chillicothe. **Wright** was later arrested when his vehicle was stopped in Davies County, Mo., by the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Davies County, Mo., Sheriff's Department. The stolen pistol was found under the front passenger seat, Graves said.



As a result of today's guilty plea, **Wright** could be subject to a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. The sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled sometime after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jess E. Michaelsen. It was investigated by the Daviess County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, th Livingston county, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Ray County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the NITRO Task Force.

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

