

NEWS RELEASE

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ORCHARDVILLE MAN CONVICTED IN METHAMPHETAMINE CONSPIRACY

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, today that **MICHAEL L. ALDEN**, age 50, of Orchardville, Illinois, was found guilty today following a two day jury trial in United States District Court in East St. Louis of conspiring between January 1998 and June 2004 to manufacture, distribute and possess with intent to distribute more than 500 grams of methamphetamine.

ALDEN and nineteen other defendants were charged with that offense by a Federal Grand Jury in July 2004. The Grand Jury returned a Superseding Indictment charging eleven more defendants in July 2005. All thirty of ALDEN's codefendants have previously pled guilty and have either been sentenced or are awaiting sentencing.

Evidence adduced at trial showed that the conspiracy was centered in Wayne County, but reached into several surrounding counties and even into the Metro East and Chicago where ALDEN and his coconspirators would purchase large quantities of precursors to use in manufacturing the methamphetamine.

ALDEN faces a sentence of imprisonment of between 20 years and life, a fine of up to \$10 million, and a term of 10 years supervised release to follow his incarceration. ALDEN has been held without bond since his arrest and was again remanded to the custody of the United States Marshal pending sentencing which was set for February 26, 2007, in East St. Louis.

The on-going investigation is being led by the Carmi office of the Southern Illinois Drug Task Force, with the assistance of the Illinois State Police, the Fairfield Police Department, the Carmi Police Department, the White County Sheriff's Department, the Joint Narcotics Unit of the Mt. Vernon Police Department and Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Wayne County State's Attorney's Office, the White County State's Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James M. Cutchin.