

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

April 8, 2009

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MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ROLE IN COCAINE DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Efrain Pineda-Buenaventura, 33, a citizen of Mexico, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 10 years in prison for conspiring to possess cocaine with intent to distribute. Pineda-Buenaventura will be deported to Mexico after he completes his prison sentence.

Beginning in February 2008, the United States received authority from Chief Judge Crabb to conduct wiretaps on several of the telephones being used by Pineda-Buenaventura and his co-defendants to conduct a drug operation run out of multiple dwellings in Watertown. Approximately 8,000 calls were monitored by law enforcement officers in which the defendant and others were overheard conducting drug transactions.

On June 19, 2008, law enforcement officers executed 11 search warrants in the Western and Eastern Districts of Wisconsin, resulting in the arrest of Pineda-Buenaventura and eleven other individuals, the seizure of over \$100,000 in United States

currency, several automobiles, and multiple kilograms of cocaine.

Judge Crabb stated that a lengthy sentence was appropriate given Pineda-Buenventura's leadership role in the conspiracy and his disregard for the law of the United States.

The charges against the defendants were the result of an investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration; Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation; Dodge County Sheriff's Department; Jefferson County Drug Task Force; Fort Atkinson Police Department; Watertown Police Department; and Janesville Police Department. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul W. Connell.

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