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TWO JOHNSON COUNTY MEN CHARGED WITH TRAFFICKING IN COUNTERFEIT COMPUTER HARDWARE

KANSAS CITY, KAN. – Christopher Myers, 40, Leawood, Kan., and Timothy Weatherly, 27, Overland Park, Kan., are charged with one count of conspiracy, 30 counts of trafficking in counterfeit goods and one count of trafficking in counterfeit labels, U.S. Attorney Lanny Welch said today.

Myers made an initial appearance on the charges today in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Kan. The indictment alleges that Myers, who in 2003 founded a company called Deals Express in Merriam, Kan., conspired with Weatherly, who in 2005 established a company called Deals Direct, Inc., in Overland Park, to import counterfeit Cisco brand computer hardware from China. In order to make the hardware look authentic they attached counterfeit Cisco labels to the components, and packaged them in counterfeit Cisco boxes along with counterfeit Cisco manuals.

Myers and Weatherly had the counterfeit components sent from China to various shipping addresses in Kansas including self-storage facilities in Lenexa, Merriam, Mission, Overland Park, and Kansas City, Kan., as well as UPS stores in Seattle, Wash., and Portland, Ore. Starting in November 2005, shipments of counterfeit goods were seized in Louisville, Ky., Los Angeles, Calif., and Wilmington, Ohio. Counterfeit goods seized included network cards, connectors, manuals, labels and boxes.

In August 2005, Weatherly established a Web site for Deals Direct and began using eBay to sell counterfeit Cisco products under the name “direct2technology.” The defendants made suggestions to their suppliers in Shenzhen, China, and Hong Kong for adjustments to the products to make them appear more authentic. After goods were seized in Wilmington, Ore., the defendants made various changes in their shipping arrangements to attempt to avoid detection, including shipping to an address in Portland, Ore., and having counterfeit goods shipped through other countries including Sweden.

In a separate forfeiture count, the government seeks a \$1 million judgment, representing the proceeds of the crimes.

If convicted, Myers and Weatherly face a maximum penalty of 5 years in federal prison and a fine up to \$250,000 on the conspiracy charge and a maximum penalty of 10 years

and a fine up to \$2 million on each of the trafficking counts. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation worked on the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Rask is prosecuting.

In all cases, defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The indictments filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.