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For Immediate Release
February 13, 2007

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\$264,000 DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES CONCLUDING OPERATION “MECHANICAL BREAKDOWN”

Feds give Ouachita Parish District Attorney's Office and Bossier City Police Department funds forfeited by drug traffickers

Monroe, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that checks totaling \$264,031.45 have been presented to the Ouachita Parish District Attorney's Office and the Bossier City Police Department for their participation in a narcotics investigation which resulted in the federal conviction of ERIC GERMAN and the forfeiture of assets which Mr. GERMAN obtained as a result of his drug trafficking.

In August 2005, a federal jury in Shreveport returned guilty verdicts against GERMAN for two counts of conspiracy to distribute cocaine, two counts of possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Federal and local law enforcement agencies began investigating GERMAN in 2002. Surveillance efforts paid off in August 2004 when agents followed GERMAN and a co-defendant to a location on Youree Drive in Shreveport where they rendezvoused with a tow truck pulling two vehicles. After observing a transfer of a package from one vehicle to another, agents stopped the vehicle driven by GERMAN and discovered a kilogram of cocaine. The remaining vehicle was also searched and

agents discovered an additional 749 grams of powder cocaine and 422 grams of crack cocaine. Trial testimony from one of GERMAN's former associates revealed that he had been dealing cocaine with GERMAN since 1995.

The investigation and prosecution of GERMAN's drug trafficking organization was undertaken through the Organized Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) under an operation dubbed "Mechanical Breakdown." The nationwide goal of the OCDETF program is to reduce the supply of illegal drugs in the United States. Federal agencies partner with state and local officers and prosecutors to disrupt and completely dismantle significant drug trafficking organizations. U.S. Attorneys around the nation continue to press federal, state and local law enforcement officers to perform financial investigations in order to completely dismantle a drug trafficking organization, and to prevent its re-emergence. It has been estimated that drug trafficking revenues in the United States are approximately \$65 billion. Consequently, leaders in the law enforcement community strongly believe that resources should be allocated to identify, locate, seize, and forfeit all assets representing proceeds from drug trafficking or assets used to facilitate drug trafficking activities.

GERMAN's organization was believed to be a major drug trafficking operation in northeast Louisiana. Prosecutors and agents believed that GERMAN's organization was responsible for trafficking major quantities of cocaine. A financial investigation was initiated to seize and forfeit GERMAN's assets to dismantle the organization - root, branch and stem.

The Court ordered GERMAN to forfeit to the government proceeds of his drug trafficking which included property that he owned in Bastrop, Louisiana, valued at \$560,000, which had previously been seized by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. GERMAN was sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison.

These payments to the Ouachita Parish District Attorney’s Office and the Bossier City Police Department are made as part of the United States Department of Justice’s Asset Forfeiture Equitable Sharing Program. This program enables state and local law enforcement agencies to receive a share of the federally forfeited assets proportional to an agency’s investigative contribution to a successful forfeiture prosecution. These two agencies together with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Monroe Resident Agency, took part in the investigation of GERMAN and others which resulted in the conviction of three individuals in federal court.

The Department of Justice’s Asset Forfeiture Program has three primary goals. The first goal is to punish and deter criminal activity by depriving criminals of property used or acquired in an illegal manner. The second goal is to enhance cooperation among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies through the equitable sharing of assets seized and forfeited under federal law. The third goal of the Department’s Asset Forfeiture Program is to produce revenues to assist and enhance law enforcement and forfeiture efforts.

U.S. Attorney Washington stated: “Drug money and property seized from drug traffickers are often distributed to agencies assisting in the investigation and prosecution of drug cases. When federal, state and local law enforcement agencies work together, many good things typically occur. Criminals are brought to justice, their assets are seized and forfeited, and they often serve very long jail terms up to life in federal prison.”

The agencies and the amounts received by each are as follows:

Ouachita Parish District Attorney’s Office	\$ 255,285.41
Bossier City Police Department	\$ <u>8,746.04</u>
TOTAL	\$ 264,031.45

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