



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Iowa

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## **Council Bluffs Men Sentenced in Drug Trafficking Conspiracy**

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA – On September 18, 2012, Steven Lacey Etherington, age 27, and Nicholas Joseph Franks, age 34, both of Council Bluffs, Iowa, were sentenced in United States District Court in Council Bluffs for their roles in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, announced United States Attorney Nicholas A. Klinefeldt. Franks was also sentenced on a charge of felon in possession of a firearm. United States District Court Judge John A. Jarvey sentenced Etherington to 150 months in prison, to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. Judge Jarvey sentenced Franks to 133 months imprisonment, plus 5 years of supervised release for the drug trafficking conspiracy, and 120 months imprisonment, plus 3 years of supervised release for the firearms conviction, with the sentences on both counts to be served concurrently. The Court also ordered Etherington to pay a \$100 special assessment for the Crime Victim Fund, and Franks to pay a \$200 assessment for the Fund. Both Defendants are in the custody of the United States Marshal pending designation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons facility at which each Defendant will serve his sentence.

Each Defendant was charged in a multiple count Indictment dealing with various drug trafficking charges. Both Defendants pled guilty to participation in a conspiracy to distribute up to approximately 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of methamphetamine, involving at least 5 people, with the conspiracy lasting from in or about December of 2008, to at least in or about July of 2010.

The conspiracy involved distribution of methamphetamine to some females under age 21, the operation of a drug house in Council Bluffs, and trading stolen property for methamphetamine.

Franks was also involved in the sale, in Council Bluffs, on or about July 27, 2011, of a stolen Mossberg 12 gauge shotgun and fifty one 12 gauge shells to what he later learned was an undercover officer from the SouthWest Iowa Narcotics Enforcement Task Force. At the time of the sale, Franks had previously been convicted of Theft in the Second Degree, a felony under Iowa law.

This case is related to *United States of America v. David Lynn Fisher*, Southern District of Iowa Criminal No. 1:11-cr-021. In that case David Lynn Fisher, a co-conspirator with Etherington and Franks for a period of time, was sentenced to 117 months imprisonment, plus 5 years of supervised release for his role in the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

This case was investigated by the SouthWest Iowa Narcotics Enforcement Task Force, and the case was prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa.

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