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October 27, 2004

**ROCKFORD RESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY
TO ILLEGALLY POSSESSING A FIREARM**

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); PAUL A. LOGLI, Winnebago County State's Attorney; and STEVEN PUGH, Rockford Police Chief, today made the following announcement:

COREY L. SYKES, 27 (DOB: 10/18/1977), formerly of 1004 Island Avenue, Rockford, Illinois, pled guilty today in federal court in Rockford to the federal charge of being a felon in possession of a firearm. **LATOYA S. HORTON**, 22 (DOB: 4/2/1982), 1996 Davis Drive, Rockford, Illinois, and **MONICA D. BOX**, 23 (DOB: 11/25/1980), 707 Cunningham #F, Rockford, Illinois, have been charged with aiding and abetting Sykes in the offense.

In pleading guilty, Sykes admitted that on April 30, 2004, he and Horton went to a firearms dealer in Cherry Valley ("the Store"), to select a handgun to purchase. As a convicted felon, Sykes did not have a Firearm Owners Identification ("FOID") card and was prohibited from possessing a firearm. Sykes admitted in the plea agreement to directing Horton, who had a FOID card, to look at a Hi-Point .40 caliber pistol. According to the plea agreement, Sykes and Horton left the Store as they knew Horton would not be allowed to purchase the pistol because the required, pre-sale telephone inquiry through the Illinois State Police Firearms Transfer Inquiry Program would have revealed that Horton's FOID card had been revoked.

Sykes admitted that on the evening of April 30, 2004, he obtained \$170 from Horton to purchase the pistol. According to the plea agreement, Sykes and Box went to the Store where Sykes handed Box \$200 in cash and directed her to purchase the Hi Point JCP .40 caliber pistol. According to the plea agreement, Sykes and Box left the store without the pistol because of the mandatory 72-hours waiting period imposed after the purchase of a firearm before a purchaser is permitted to take possession of firearm.

On the afternoon of May 5, 2004, the plea agreement stated, Horton drove Sykes and Box to the Store to pick up the pistol. Box entered the Store alone while Sykes and Horton waited outside in the parking lot. Sykes admitted in the plea agreement that when Box returned to the vehicle with the pistol, he directed Box to give him the handgun. Sykes began removing the pistol from the box as Horton drove away from the Store's parking lot. Law enforcement agents stopped the vehicle shortly after it left the parking lot.

Sykes was charged under tough federal firearms laws as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an intensive, cooperative effort between local, state, and federal law enforcement to attack gun crimes. Additional information about Project Safe Neighborhoods may be found at www.psn.gov.

Sentencing for Sykes will be conducted on December 29, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. Sykes faces a possible maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, a period of supervised release of at least two and up to three years following imprisonment, and a fine of up to \$250,000. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Judge Philip G. Reinhard, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines and the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure

With regard to Horton and Box, members of the public are reminded that an indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Each defendant is entitled to a fair trial at which time the government has the burden of proving each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The Rockford Office of the ATF and the Rockford Police Department investigated this case. It is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

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