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# **News Release**

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## **Brooklyn Park man pleads guilty to managing a house that was used in marijuana grow operation**

A 32-year-old Brooklyn Park man pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court to managing a house that was used to grow marijuana.

Ngoc Ba Phung pleaded guilty to one count of aiding and abetting the maintenance of a drug-involved premises. Phung entered his plea Jan. 15 in St. Paul before United States District Court Judge Donovan Frank. Phung and a second defendant, Josep Long Van Bui, 47, Elk River, were charged on July 30, 2008.

On Dec. 4, Bui pleaded guilty to one count of aiding and abetting the maintenance of a drug-involved premises.

According to Phung's plea agreement, he admitted that from April 2008 through June 21, 2008, he acted as the manager of an Elk River residence knowing that there was a marijuana growing operation in the home, and aided and abetted Bui by allowing him to continue to rent the premises knowing that it was being used to manufacture marijuana. Bui began leasing the home in November 2007.

According to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) affidavit, law enforcement learned about the grow operation in April 2008, and observed Phung at the residence, located in the 10000 block of 176th NW Lane, on May 18 and June 13, 2008.

Police executed a search warrant at the residence on June 21, and recovered 870 marijuana plants. Phung was found at the residence and arrested.

Police also executed a search warrant at a Rogers residence on June 21, and found evidence of a dismantled marijuana grow operation.

Phung and Bui each face a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Judge Frank will determine their sentences at a future date.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and the DEA. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney LeeAnn K. Bell.