



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW BRAUNFELS MAN ADMITS COMMITTING BANK ROBBERIES

John E. Murphy, Acting U.S. Attorney announced that in Austin this morning, 27-year-old Christopher Ryan Smith pleaded guilty to a string of bank and convenience store robberies as well as brandishing a firearm during one of the bank robberies.

Appearing before United States Magistrate Judge Robert Pitman, Smith pleaded guilty to three bank robbery counts, one Hobbs Act count (interference with commerce by robbery) and one count of brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence. By pleading guilty, Smith admitted that on October 27, 2008, he robbed the American Bank of Texas located in Garden Ridge, Texas; on December 12, 2008, he robbed the American National Bank in Luling, Texas; and, on January 12, 2009, he robbed the American National Bank located on Hunter Road in San Marcos, Texas. Smith also admitted responsibility for robbing the Dollar General Store located on Willow Springs Drive in San Marcos on April 16, 2009. Finally, Smith admitted that he brandished an automatic handgun during the January 12, 2009, bank robbery in San Marcos. According to court documents, Smith stole more than \$28,000 during these robberies. Local law enforcement captured Smith in New Braunfels after he led them on a high speed chase down Interstate 35 following the April 16, 2009, robbery in San Marcos.

Smith faces up to 20 years in federal prison for each bank robbery charge, a mandatory seven years on the firearms charge and up to 20 years in federal prison on the Hobbs Act charge.

Sentencing is scheduled for 9:00am on September 11, 2009, before United States District Judge Sam Sparks..

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation together with local law enforcement agencies where the offenses took place. Assistant United States Attorney Mark Lane is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

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