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ADMITTED VICE LORDS GANG MEMBER SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ILLEGAL GUN POSSESSION

CHICAGO — A Chicago man who is an admitted member of the Vice Lords street gang was sentenced to 10 years in prison for possessing a firearm after having been previously convicted of felony offense, federal law enforcement officials announced today. **Stephen Waltower**, 26, whose last known address was in the 3600 block of West Lexington Street, Chicago, received the maximum sentence that could be imposed under federal law for being a convicted felon-in-possession of a firearm.

Waltower was sentenced late last Thursday by U.S. District Judge David Coar , who also imposed three years of supervised release, said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. At sentencing, the government cited Waltower's criminal history dating back many years, including five drug offenses and one prior weapons offense.

According to court documents, on Sept. 7, 2007, in Chicago, Waltower possessed a stolen Glock 19, 9-millimeter pistol, as well as crack cocaine. After a jury trial in June this year, Waltower was convicted of possessing the firearm after previously being convicted of a felony. The firearm was found in close proximity to more than 200 plastic bags of crack cocaine, totaling approximately

49 grams, packaged for resale; however, Waltower was acquitted of charges alleging he intended to distribute the crack cocaine.

The case was investigated by the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives as part of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) program. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office, which initially brought charges, later referred the case to the U.S. Attorney's Office for federal prosecution.

The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Renai Rodney and Timothy Chapman.

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