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**NINE AURORA RESIDENTS FACING FEDERAL GUN AND/OR DRUG CHARGES;
10 OTHERS CHARGED WITH STATE DRUG OR WEAPONS OFFENSES**

CHICAGO — Nine Aurora residents are facing federal drug and/or gun charges for allegedly selling crack or powder cocaine, as well as heroin and firearms in some cases, federal and local law enforcement officials announced today. An additional 10 defendants are facing state drug or weapons charges in Kane County. The charges stem from an investigation of firearms and narcotics trafficking in Kane County led by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, together with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and the Aurora Police Department.

Five of the nine federal defendants were arrested today and the remaining four were already in custody. During the investigation, which began in the spring of 2011, agents seized five firearms, including two 12 gauge shotguns, and various amounts of crack and powder cocaine and heroin.

The federal defendants were charged in nine separate complaints that were filed Tuesday and unsealed today in U.S. District Court. The five defendants arrested today appeared this afternoon before Magistrate Judge Jeffrey T. Gilbert in U.S. District Court.

Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, praised the teamwork of the ATF and HSI agents, along with the Aurora Police Department and the Kane

County State's Attorney's Office. Mr. Shapiro announced the charges with Larry Ford, Special Agent-in-Charge of ATF in Chicago; Gary Hartwig, Special Agent-in-Charge of HSI in Chicago; and Greg Thomas, Aurora Police Chief. The investigation was conducted under the umbrella of the U.S. Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

"Today's charges demonstrate ATF's commitment to get illegal firearms, narcotics, and the alleged criminals who use them, off the streets. We look forward to continuing to work closely with our federal, state and local law enforcement colleagues to combat violent crimes in Aurora, Kane County, and the entire state of Illinois," Mr. Ford said.

"This operation exemplifies the ongoing partnerships the Aurora Police Department has established with our federal law enforcement partners to reduce criminality by relentlessly attacking the nexus between gangs, drugs, and illegal weapons," Chief Thomas said.

All nine federal defendants were charged with at least one count of distribution of a controlled substance for allegedly selling various amounts of crack or powder cocaine, or heroin, to an individual who was cooperating with law enforcement. Two defendants were also charged with being a felon-in-possession of a firearm for allegedly selling a weapon to a cooperating individual. The primary confidential source ("CS1" in the affidavits) is described as an admitted member of an Aurora street gang.

Lawrence Donaldson, 26, allegedly sold two 12 gauge shotguns, a .45 caliber pistol, and a .38 caliber handgun, as well as heroin. **Kendrick Webber**, 27, allegedly sold a .22 caliber revolver and ammunition, as well as crack cocaine.

Also charged with distribution of a controlled substance were: **Antoine Harris**, 30; **Maurice Payne**, 43; **Johnathon Ibister**, 31; **Rasheed Naylor**, 31; **Keiotto Tennial**, 33; **Arnoldo Cepeda**, 36; and **Mark Jones**, 36, all of Aurora.

Harris and Payne each face a mandatory minimum sentence of five years to a maximum of 40 years in prison and a \$5 million fine. The other seven federal defendants each face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Anthony Garcia and Dylan Smith.

The public is reminded that complaints contain only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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