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News Release

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St. Cloud felon pleads guilty to possessing a .38-caliber handgun

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court, a 30-year-old St. Cloud felon pleaded guilty to possessing a .38-caliber handgun. Specifically, Aaron Dante Moreno pleaded guilty to one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Moreno, who was indicted on May 18, 2011, entered his plea before United States District Court Judge Ann D. Montgomery. In his plea agreement, Moreno admitted that on October 4, 2010, he possessed the pistol and brandished it in order to gain entry to a St. Cloud residence.

Because he is a felon, Moreno is prohibited under federal law from possessing a firearm at any time. Moreover, since he has been convicted of three or more separate violent felonies, Moreno is being prosecuted as an armed career criminal. Pursuant to that statute, he faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison. Judge Montgomery will determine the exact sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled.

Moreno's prior felonies convictions include terroristic threats in Benton County (2005 and 2009) and third-degree burglary in Benton County (2006); third-degree assault in Dakota County (2009); and second-degree burglary in Pine County (2001).

This case was the result of an investigation by the St. Cloud Police Department and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin S. Ueland.

Note, this case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods ("PSN"), an initiative launched by the U.S. Justice Department in 2001 to promote a multi-jurisdictional, comprehensive approach to reducing gun crime in America. PSN provides resources to strengthen law enforcement and crime prevention partnerships that are working to make our streets and communities safer.

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