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# **News Release**

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## **Seventh indicted for trafficking methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana**

A federal superseding indictment filed today in Minneapolis charges a seventh individual with offenses related to a drug trafficking operation that functioned in Minnesota between January of 2009 and December of 2010. Jairo Chaides, age 25, address unknown, has been charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana. Six others were previously indicted for that same conspiracy offense: Noe Alamos Pantoja, age 27, of Minneapolis; Daniel Ruacho, age 20, of South St. Paul; Giesy Sanchez, age 23, of Champlin; Gabriel Damas Martinez, age 27, of Brooklyn Center; and Benjamin Perez, Jr., 30 age, and Cruz Rosales, age 21, both of Hugo. In addition, Sanchez was charged with three counts of distribution of methamphetamine; Ruacho was charged with two counts of distribution of methamphetamine and one count of distribution of cocaine; Pantoja was charged with one count of distribution of methamphetamine and one count of distribution of cocaine; Perez and Rosales were charged with one count of distribution of methamphetamine; and Martinez was charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

Allegedly, from January of 2009, through December 13, 2010, the defendants conspired to distribute 500 or more grams of methamphetamine, five kilograms of cocaine and 100 kilograms of marijuana. Moreover, Sanchez purportedly distributed methamphetamine on January 28, May 25, and September 17, 2010; while Ruacho allegedly distributed methamphetamine on February 17 and March 1, 2010, along with an ounce of cocaine on July 27, 2010. Pantoja reportedly distributed methamphetamine on March 1, and one ounce of cocaine on July 27. In addition, Perez and Rosales allegedly distributed one pound of methamphetamine on July 31, 2010, while Martinez allegedly possessed with intent to distribute one pound of that same drug on November 28, 2009.

According to law enforcement affidavits filed in the case, Chaides had been under investigation since May of 2010, after authorities reportedly learned he was a drug courier for

trips between California and Minnesota, some of those trips involving shipments of up to ten kilograms of cocaine. In mid-June 2010, Chaides was stopped by police in Nebraska, and several thousands of dollars were purportedly found in his vehicle. Next, on June 20, 2010, Chaides' vehicle was located at a Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, motel. A drug dog allegedly alerted to the parked vehicle, so a court-ordered tracking device was placed on it. Then, on June 22, 2010, the vehicle was spotted at a house in Maple Grove, where officers also saw Pantoja enter and later leave with a plastic bag. On December 15, 2010, Chaides was arrested along with Sanchez and Pantoja. Subsequently, his vehicle was located and searched and officers found \$181,610 in cash in a hidden compartment under the hood.

If convicted, the defendants face a potential maximum penalty of life in prison on the conspiracy charge, 40 years on the methamphetamine distribution count, 20 years on the cocaine distribution count, and life on the possession with intent to distribute count. All sentences will be determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey S. Paulsen.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by a defendant. A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.