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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, January 20, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN

Felon indicted for possessing a .22 caliber revolver

A 42-year-old felon was indicted today in federal court in Minneapolis for allegedly possessing a .22 caliber revolver on September 13, 2010. Robert Ellis Hastings, of Cascade Township in Olmsted County, was charged with one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. He remains in custody.

Because he is a felon, Hastings cannot legally possess firearms or ammunition at any time. His prior convictions include two in North Carolina for robbery (1993 and 2000) and two from Wisconsin (2005), one of them for bail jumping and the other for aggravated battery with intent to cause great harm (2005). Since at least three of those offenses were crimes of violence, Hastings is now subject to the federal armed career criminal statute, which mandates a 15-year minimum prison sentence if he is convicted of the charge presently levied against him. He faces a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. All sentences, of course, will be determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Southeast Minnesota Narcotics and Gang Task Force, the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office, and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael A. Dees.

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 work to make our streets and communities safer.

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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.