



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,
United States Attorney**

**Jeanne F. Cooney
Director of Community Relations
(612) 664-5611
email: jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov**

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 9, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN

Second of two Hermantown men sentenced for growing marijuana in his home

The second of two men from the small northeastern Minnesota community of Hermantown was sentenced earlier today in federal court in Minneapolis for growing marijuana in his home. United States District Court Judge David S. Doty sentenced Matthew Daniel Blank, age 23, to 18 months in federal prison on one count of conspiracy to manufacture marijuana. He was indicted, along with Michael Larry King, age 24, on September 9, 2010, and pleaded guilty on November 5, 2010. On March 7, 2011, Judge Doty sentenced King to 18 months. He pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy on October 29, 2010.

In their plea agreements, Blank and King admitted that from January of 2009 through November 3, 2009, they conspired to grow, cultivate, and manufacture marijuana in their Hermantown home. Authorities seized approximately 300 plants from the house.

Following today's sentencing, Dan Moren, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's Minneapolis-St. Paul District Office, said, "Clandestine indoor marijuana growing operations pose a number of threats to our local communities. In addition to cultivating an illegal drug for distribution, those cultivating marijuana destroy the inside of homes as a result of mold generated during growing process and by illegally tampering with electrical systems, creating fire hazards, to name a few. This investigation is an outstanding example of county and federal law enforcement agencies combining resources to eradicate organizations that negatively impact the quality of life in our neighborhoods."

This case was the result of investigations by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew R. Winter.

###

