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News Release

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Federal jury finds felon guilty of possessing a .45 caliber pistol

Earlier this afternoon in federal court in Minneapolis, a jury found a 32-year-old Minneapolis felon guilty of possessing a firearm. Following a three-day trial and an hour of deliberation, Todd Richard Chazen was convicted of one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. He was indicted on December 14, 2010.

Because Chazen was previously convicted of at least one felony, he is prohibited under federal law from possessing firearms at any time. Moreover, since many of his prior felony convictions were for violent crimes or serious drug offenses, he is now subject at sentencing to the federal armed career criminal statute, which mandates a minimum of 15 years in federal prison if he is convicted in the current case. U.S. District Court Judge Ann D. Montgomery will determine his exact sentence at a hearing not yet scheduled.

According to the evidence presented at trial, on August 14, 2010, Chazen possessed a .45-caliber pistol. A law enforcement affidavit filed in the case indicates that on that day, the Goodhue County Sheriff's Office responded to a report of two suspicious vehicles parked near Cannon Falls. Inside one of the vehicles, authorities reportedly found a holster, a document with Chazen's name on it, and a new pair of shoes. Along the road, near the vehicles, officers purportedly discovered the pistol inside a shoe box. Upon further investigation, police determined that Chazen had driven one of the vehicles and had removed the shoe box from the trunk just prior to the officer's arrival. He was eventually arrested.

Chazen's prior convictions include second-degree assault (1995), second-degree burglary (2002), second-degree manufacture of a controlled substance (2002), and second-degree burglary (2003).

This case is the result of an investigation by the Goodhue County Sheriff's Office, the

Olmstead County Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael A. Dees.

Note, this case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, 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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