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News Release

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Man sentenced for sex trafficking of a minor

Earlier today in federal court in Minneapolis, a 38-year-old man was sentenced for running a prostitution operation in the Twin Cities during the summer of 2007 that used multiple underage girls. United States District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen sentenced Arthur James Chappell, no known address, to 336 months in prison on one count of sex trafficking a minor. Chappell was indicted on May 19, 2009, and convicted by a jury following a two-day trial on September 15, 2010.

According to evidence presented at trial, from May of 2007 through July 3, 2007, Chappell knowingly recruited at least one girl under the age of 18 to engage in commercial sex acts. In June of 2007, the Bloomington Police Department conducted surveillance at a hotel, where they found four adult women in a room rented by Chappell. Police later learned that Chappell was prostituting both adult and juvenile females, promoting his business through computer ads on the Internet sites Craigslist and Backpage.com. The girls were prostituted in both homes and hotels.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Bloomington Police Department and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Erika R. Mozangue.

The investigation was aided by the Gerald D. Vick Human Trafficking Task Force, which was named for the slain St. Paul police officer who dedicated his professional life to eradicating trafficking and prostitution. The Task Force was established with federal funds and is comprised of investigators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, ICE, the police departments of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the sheriff's office in both Hennepin and Ramsey counties, along with other law enforcement agencies.

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that an estimated 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked within the U.S. each year. According to the Justice Department, the Twin Cities metropolitan area is one of the 15 largest human trafficking centers in the nation.

