



**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

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Washington man sentenced for conspiring to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court in St. Paul, the last of three men was sentenced for conspiring to possess with intent to distribute 500 or more grams of methamphetamine. United States District Court Judge Donovan W. Frank sentenced Miguel Farid Soto-Chavez, age 25, of Toppenish, Washington, to 58 months in prison on one count of conspiracy. Soto-Chavez, who was indicted along with two co-defendants on February 8, 2011, pleaded guilty on April 14, 2011.

On July 28, 2011, Judge Frank sentenced Aldolfo Alonso Medina, age 33, of St. Paul, to 87 months, and Juan Carlos Aguilar-Mora, age 28, address unknown, to 49 months, each on one count of conspiracy. Both men also pleaded guilty on April 14, 2011.

In their plea agreements, the defendants admitted that on January 10, 2011, they conspired to possess with intent to distribute 500 or more grams of methamphetamine. On January 6, 2011, federal agents seized approximately 21.2 pounds of pure methamphetamine that had been hidden in a secret compartment of a vehicle in California. The vehicle's driver, who had been recruited by the supplier to drive a Ford F-150 truck to Minnesota, was working with federal agents. Authorities substituted false methamphetamine for the real drugs, and the driver then made arrangements to deliver the goods to Medina at a St. Paul motel. Soto-Chavez subsequently picked the truck up at the motel. He was followed by a second vehicle driven by Medina. Aguilar-Mora was a passenger in Medina's truck. Soto-Chavez drove to a South St. Paul residence and parked the truck in a garage.

Later that evening, another vehicle drove up to the garage, parked for a short period of time, and then drove away again with Aguilar-Mora as a passenger. Police stopped the vehicle and found a suitcase filled with the fake methamphetamine. Aguilar-Mora was immediately arrested. At the same time, police also stopped Medina and Soto-Chavez, who were following Aguilar-

Mora. Medina and Soto-Chavez also were arrested, and officers found fake methamphetamine in Medina's pocket.

Soto-Chavez subsequently pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute 50 or more grams of methamphetamine in connection with an unrelated case. Soto-Chavez was indicted in that case on February 24, 2011. He admitted that from 2008 through April 20, 2010, he conspired with others to distribute 50 or more grams of methamphetamine. Soto-Chavez specifically admitted distributing methamphetamine ranging between 27.5 and 111.5 grams on four occasions between February 5 and April 20, 2010.

This case was the result of an investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the St. Paul Police Department, and the South St. Paul Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas M. Hollenhorst.

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