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LEAWOOD MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SMUGGLING COUNTERFEIT CISCO COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

KANSAS CITY, KAN. – A Leawood, Kan., man has pleaded guilty to selling \$1 million worth of counterfeit Cisco computer equipment, U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said today.

Christopher Myers, 41, Leawood, Kan., pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to bring goods into the United States by false statements, smuggle goods into the United States and traffic in counterfeit goods. Last month, co-defendant **Timothy Weatherly**, 28, Overland Park, Kan., pleaded guilty to the same charge.

In his plea, Myers admitted he conspired with Weatherly, who operated a business called Deals Direct, Inc. from his home in Overland Park and a warehouse in Merriam, Kan. Beginning in 2005 and continuing through Nov. 14, 2006, Myers and Weatherly imported computer equipment from China. They put counterfeit Cisco labels on the equipment and placed the counterfeit goods in Cisco boxes with counterfeit Cisco manuals. The counterfeit equipment was sold on Deal Direct's Web site and on eBay as genuine Cisco equipment.

The conspirators obtained access to Cisco's confidential serial number verification Web site in order to obtain legitimate serial numbers. Working with a manufacturer in Hong Kong, the conspirators used multiple shippers and other methods to attempt to keep shipments from being seized by customs officials. When investigators served a search warrant Nov. 8, 2006, in Merriam, Kan., they found hundreds of counterfeit Cisco labels, stickers, boxes and documentation as well as thousands of counterfeit Cisco goods.

Myers is set for sentencing April 4, 2011. He faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison and a fine up to \$250,000. In his plea agreement, Myers agreed to a \$1 million money judgment to forfeit all proceeds from the crime.

Co-defendant Weatherly is set for sentencing Feb. 14, 2011.

Grissom commended Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Rask for their work on the case. This case was prosecuted in cooperation with the Justice Department's Task Force on Intellectual Property (IP Task Force). For more information, see www.justice.gov/dag/iptaskforce.