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For Immediate Release
May 29, 2009

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ANOTHER MEMBER OF DRUG TRAFFICKING RING SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT

Valdez receives six and a half years in prison

LAFAYETTE, LA . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that **SABINA LUNA VALDEZ**, age 61, of Weslaco, Texas, was sentenced in United States District Court for her role in a drug trafficking conspiracy to distribute cocaine and marijuana. U. S. District Judge Rebecca F. Doherty sentenced VALDEZ to spend six and half years in a federal prison to be followed by a term of four years of supervised release. She received credit for time served.

SABINA VALDEZ, a repeat offender, was originally indicted in November 2006 and in a Superseding Indictment in November 2007. VALDEZ pled guilty in December 2008 for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, cocaine base and marijuana.

VALDEZ, along with 12 co-defendants, was involved in a major drug trafficking conspiracy to distribute cocaine and marijuana from South Texas to Louisiana and other locations within the United States. VALDEZ admitted that she conspired with her family members and others in South Texas to transport and deliver cocaine and marijuana to co-defendant Eric Joseph Alexander and his associates in the Acadiana region of Louisiana and to other locations in the U. S. She also admits that the quantities of cocaine delivered

during the conspiracy was in excess of five kilograms. Further, she and her family members transported drug proceeds from various locations in the United States back to the source of the drugs in South Texas. SABINA VALDEZ also has a prior federal drug conviction in the Southern District of Texas arising from a search at the Mexico border. At that time, SABINA VALDEZ was found with seven packages of cocaine wrapped in saran wrap and concealed around her torso. VALDEZ pled guilty for that offense on February 4, 2005 and was sentenced on June 28, 2005 to 46 months imprisonment, followed by four years supervised release, which was also a part of this conspiracy.

The facts surrounding the co-defendants are as follows:

ERIC JOSEPH ALEXANDER, age 32, of Lafayette, Louisiana, pled guilty in December 2008 to Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, cocaine base and marijuana, Count 12 of the Superseding Indictment for possession of firearm by convicted felon and Count 15 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to commit money laundering. Sentencing has not been scheduled.

FRANCISCA WILTZ ALEXANDER, age 32, of Lafayette, Louisiana, pled guilty in November 2007 to Count 1 of a Bill of Information for conspiracy to commit money laundering and was sentenced in April 2008 to three (3) years imprisonment and a term of three (3) years supervised release following confinement.

BRYAN LEE MALBREAUX, age 26, of Lafayette, Louisiana, pled guilty in August 2007 to Count 1 of the Indictment for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, cocaine base and marijuana and Count 13 of the Indictment for possession of firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and was sentenced in February 2008 to 14 years imprisonment as to Count 1 and five (5) years imprisonment as to Count 13, which shall run consecutively. The defendant also received five (5) years supervised release, per count, following confinement, which shall run concurrently.

RODNEY ONTAVIOUS GATLIN, age 33, of Houston, Texas, pled guilty in December 2008 to Counts 1 and 2 of a Bill of Information for unlawful use of a communications facility. Sentencing has not been scheduled.

MARIA AIDE DELGADO, age 44, of Weslaco, Texas, pled guilty in December 2008 to Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, cocaine base and marijuana. Sentencing has not been scheduled.

VICTOR LUNA VALDEZ, age 41, of Weslaco Texas, pled guilty in May 2008 to Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, cocaine base and marijuana and was sentenced in April 2009 to ten (10) years imprisonment and a term of five (5) years supervised release following confinement.

ANTONIO LUNA VALDEZ, JR., age 42, of Weslaco, Texas, is awaiting trial, which has not been scheduled.

ANA MARIA MONTOYA, age 40, of Mercedes, Texas, pled guilty in May 2008 to Count 15 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to commit money laundering and was sentenced in October 2008 to two and a half years imprisonment and a term of two (2) years supervised release following confinement.

MICHAEL SCOTT WYATT, age 42, of Lafayette, Louisiana, is awaiting trial, which has not been scheduled.

BARRY JOSEPH NEVEU, age 35, of Lafayette, Louisiana, pled guilty in June 2008 to Count 15 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to commit money laundering and Count 1 of a Bill of Information for tampering with a witness and was sentenced in December 2008 to five (5) years probation for each count which shall run concurrently.

WENDY DUGAS HOSSLEY, age 43, of Lafayette, Louisiana, pled guilty in February 2008 to Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, cocaine base and marijuana. Sentencing has not been scheduled.

YVETTE FRANCIS EAGLIN, age 39, of Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, is awaiting trial, which has not been scheduled.

This case was the result of an investigation conducted by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). OCDETF, consisting of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, is the nation's primary tool for disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations, targeting national and regional level drug trafficking organizations and coordinating the necessary law enforcement entities and resources to disrupt or dismantle the targeted criminal organization and seize their assets.

United States Attorney Donald W. Washington stated: "This investigation continues our efforts to strike at the heart of drug trafficking organizations. Reducing the supply of illegal drugs to this community remains a high priority for this office. We will continue to use every tool available to law enforcement to aggressively target, investigate, and prosecute drug trafficking organizations."

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was investigated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U. S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Louisiana State Police, and the Lafayette Metro Narcotics Unit. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Brett L. Grayson and Daniel J. McCoy.

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