

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
District of Oregon**



**PRESS ROOM**

09/30/2008

**Postal Carrier Sentenced to Prison for Distribution of Marijuana on Mail Route**

*One Long-Time Customer was 19 Years of Age*

Portland, Ore. – U.S. Postal Carrier Ronald Richard Berkan, 48, of Vernonia, Oregon, was sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Anna Brown to serve 18 months in prison. Berkan was sentenced following his guilty plea on April 9, 2008 to a charge of distribution of marijuana to a person under 21 years of age, which occurred on his mail route in the Cedar Mill area of Washington County. As part of the sentence, almost \$3,000 of drug proceeds belonging to the defendant was forfeited.

The investigation began in 2006 when the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the U.S. Postal Service received a citizen complaint that a uniformed postal carrier was offering marijuana for sale. After Berkan was identified as the suspect, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) joined OIG in an 11-month investigation that led to Berkan's arrest and a search of his residence where 47 marijuana plants and almost nine pounds of marijuana were found. A significant break in the investigation occurred when Lake Oswego Police Department arrested a 19-year old who had been buying marijuana from Berkan since the buyer was in high school. As part of Berkan's agreement with the prosecution, he resigned from the Postal Service on April 15, 2008 where he had worked for almost 15 years.

"Postal carriers are trusted by the public to be honest and upstanding in carrying out their duties," said Karin J. Immergut, United States Attorney for the District of Oregon. "In this case, not only did the defendant violate that public trust by dealing drugs on his mail route, but he also sold drugs to a person under 21 years of age. We commend the law enforcement agencies for their joint participation in this diligent and thorough investigation."

"The United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General considers the use, possession, or distribution of any illegal drug by postal employees to be a serious crime," said David Montoya, Special Agent in Charge of the Postal Service Office of Inspector General. "The overwhelming majority of postal employees are honest, hardworking, and trustworthy individuals who would never consider engaging in this type of criminal behaviour. But when a postal employee betrays that trust, our special agents vigorously investigate those matters. The terms of the sentencing of this postal carrier reinforces the extensive investigative efforts and commitment of the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Westside Interagency Narcotics team, the Lake Oswego Police Department, and the U.S. Attorney's Office to aggressively investigate and prosecute such behavior."

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John F. Deits.