

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2011

GAFFNEY MAN RECEIVES LIFE PRISON SENTENCE FOR \$10 CRACK COCAINE DEAL

A Gaffney man received a life prison sentence without parole today after a jury determined he sold \$10 worth of crack cocaine to an undercover police informant.

James R. Byers Jr., 28, was found guilty of third offense distribution of crack cocaine and distribution of crack cocaine within a ½ mile of a school or park during a trial at the Cherokee County Courthouse. Circuit Judge Derham Cole sentenced Byers in accordance with the state law for repeat violent offenders. Byers' prior criminal record included 5 drug convictions.

"James Byers will spend the balance of his life behind bars because he failed to stop selling drugs," Assistant Solicitor Kim Leskanic said.

Leskanic partnered with Assistant Solicitor Matt Kendall to prosecute the case.

Byers' illegal drug transaction occurred Aug. 26, 2009 near the intersection of Sixth Street and Cherokee Avenue close to Mary Bramlett Elementary School. Cherokee County sheriff's deputies videotaped the transaction between Byers and the informant. Deputies jailed Byers on Oct. 1, 2009.

In other court news, Raynard Armstrong, 27, of Gaffney, received a 10-year prison sentence today after he pleaded guilty to two counts of distribution of crack cocaine and 2 counts of distribution of crack cocaine within a half-mile of a school or park. Armstrong sold \$20 worth of crack to an undercover police informant at the Connecticut Village Apartments on Jan. 21, 2009 and Jan. 22, 2009. The transactions occurred within a half-mile of Ewiing Middle School.

For more information, contact Murray Glenn at 809-4892.

###