

## 16 From Wilkes, 1 From Alleghany Indicted by Feds

Written by DOJ Press Release  
Thursday, 11 July 2013 14:50

---

A criminal indictment charging 17 men and women with a large-scale methamphetamine trafficking conspiracy and related charges was unsealed in U.S. District Court on Wednesday, July 10, 2013, announced Anne M. Tompkins, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. The federal indictment was returned by a grand jury sitting in Charlotte on June 19, 2013, and was unsealed following arrests of the named defendants by law enforcement on Tuesday, July 9, 2013. The indictment is the result of a large-scale, multi-year joint federal and state investigation targeting the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine in Western North Carolina.

U.S. Attorney Tompkins is joined in making today's announcement by Wayne L. Dixie, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Charlotte Field Division; Greg McLeod, Director of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (NC SBI); Sheriff Chris Shew of the Wilkes County Sheriff's Office; Chief Monroe Wagoner of the Elkin Police Department; Sheriff David Edwards of the Allegheny County Sheriff's Office; and Chief Joe Rankin of the North Wilkesboro Police Department.

The defendants were charged with conspiring to distribute, possess with the intent to distribute, and manufacture more than 500 grams of methamphetamine and possession of pseudoephedrine. Those named in the indictment are:

- Stoney Shew, 32, of Wilkes County.
- Tony Lee Blevins, 45, of Wilkes County.
- Daniel Lee Foster, 36, of Wilkes County.
- Stephen Franklin Wood, 35, of Wilkes County.
- Brannon Allen McManus, 37, of Wilkes County.
- Crystal Gail Gregory, 34, of Wilkes County.
- Chad Douglas Church, 36, of Wilkes County.
- Michael Combs, A/K/A MC Hammer, 43, of Wilkes County.
- Abby Wilmoth, A/K/A Abby Jones, 33, of Wilkes County.
- Stephen James Blankenship, 36, of Wilkes County.
- Larry Don Brown, 53, of Wilkes County.
- Misty Ann Fender, A/K/A Misty Fender Gilbreath, 31, of Alleghany County.
- Matthew Chad Lovette, 32, of Wilkes County.
- Brookelyn Michelle Miller, 21, of Wilkes County.
- Rikki Ann Osborne, 37, of Wilkes County.
- Tony Steven Steelman, 26, of Wilkes County.
- Frankie Wayne Blevins, 46, of Wilkes County.

All defendants, except Shew, are also charged with possession of materials to make methamphetamine. Tony Blevins, Foster, Wood, Church, Combs, Wilmoth, Blankenship, Brown, Fender, Lovette and Osborne are also charged with maintaining a drug-involved premises. Foster, Osborne, Blankenship, Fender, Miller, and Steelman are also charged with possession of firearms in furtherance of the drug conspiracy. All defendants named in the indictment are in custody except McManus, who remains a fugitive. According to allegations contained in the indictment, in Wilkes and other counties in Western North Carolina, between January of 2009 and June 18, 2013, the defendants conspired with each other to manufacture, possess, and distribute methamphetamine and, in furtherance of the

## 16 From Wilkes, 1 From Alleghany Indicted by Feds

Written by DOJ Press Release  
Thursday, 11 July 2013 14:50

---

same, possessed and distributed pseudoephedrine. The indictment also lists other materials possessed by the defendants in furtherance of their scheme, including, but not limited to, Coleman fuel, coffee filters, lithium batteries, and two-litre plastic bottles used to manufacture methamphetamine. According to court records and statements made in court, law enforcement seized the items when they detected and shut down 15 different methamphetamine laboratories. Those arrested will remain in custody pending their detention hearings, which have been scheduled for Monday, July 15, 2013. The methamphetamine conspiracy charge carries a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life in prison and a \$10 million fine. The possession of pseudoephedrine charge carries a term of imprisonment up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The defendants charged with maintaining a drug-involved premises face a potential 20 year prison term and a \$250,000 fine for each count. The defendants charged with possession of materials to make methamphetamine face a prison term of up to 20 years and a \$250,000 fine for each count. The defendants charged with possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime face an additional, consecutive five-year prison term.

Including the defendants in this indictment, a total of 49 individuals have been prosecuted to date on federal charges for their involvement in conspiracies to manufacture, possess, and distribute methamphetamine in Wilkes and other counties in Western North Carolina. The charges contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they have been proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. The investigation is ongoing.

U.S. Attorney Tompkins thanked all of the law enforcement agencies involved in this investigation for their continued cooperation and assistance. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Ann Claire Phillips and Rebecca McNerney.