

NEWS RELEASE

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Traffickers among the 44 recently convicted in drug cases

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of June 9, 2014, the DA's Drug Prosecution Team convicted forty-four defendants in Courtroom 5350 before The Honorable Linwood O. Foust, Superior Court Judge. The convictions were for crimes that included possessing, selling, and trafficking in illegal drugs. Based on the structured sentencing laws in North Carolina, sentences ranged from probation to active prison sentences.

Among the defendants who pled guilty and were sent to prison were:

Mario Luna, 29, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. Luna was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison. On November 15, 2013, officers received a call for service that a witness observed Mario Luna engaging in drug transactions. Officers responded and asked Luna for consent to search his vehicle. Luna granted consent and the officers found 65 heroin filled balloons and a gun in the center console.

Miguel Perez, 33, pled guilty to 1) manufacturing methamphetamine, and 2) attempted trafficking in methamphetamine by possession. Perez was sentenced to 61-86 months in prison.

Brian Hayes, 38, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by possession. Hayes was sentenced to 35-51 months in prison.

Darrin Cornelius, 49, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by transportation. Cornelius was sentenced to 35-51 months in prison.

Note: Almost all guilty pleas entered in criminal administrative court are the result of an agreed upon plea arrangement between the State and the defendant, which is then approved by the sentencing judge. For more information about why most cases must be resolved by plea negotiation instead of jury trial, please visit the "Understanding Criminal Court" section of the DA's website at www.charmeckda.com.

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