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United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner
Eastern District of California

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CONTACT: Lauren Horwood
PHONE: (916) 554-2706
usacae.edcapress@usdoj.gov

REDDING POSTAL WORKER PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FROM THE MAIL

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner announced that United States Postal Service employee Shawn Michael Wardinski, 25, of Redding, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell Jr. to stealing prescription drugs from the mail.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General and the Redding Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Camil A. Skipper is prosecuting the case.

According to the plea agreement, Wardinski had been employed by the Postal Service since 2004. The plea agreement and other court documents reveal that on October 10, 2009, Wardinski was found to have two dozen prescription medications in his car during a traffic stop conducted by Redding Police officers. Most of those medications, some still in Postal Service packaging, were not prescribed to Wardinski. According to the plea agreement, some of the individuals to whom the medications were prescribed were elderly or disabled and had to obtain replacement drugs from their pharmacies. Many of the medications Wardinski stole were prescribed for pain.

As part of his plea, Wardinski agreed to make restitution to the victims of the offense, estimated to exceed \$4,200.

Wardinski is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Damrell on August 23, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of mail theft by a postal employee is five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables.

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