

Alton man pleads guilty to possession with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine

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An Alton man has entered a guilty plea in federal court to a two-count indictment charging possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine in count one and possession with intent to distribute cocaine in count two.

Donald S. Boyce, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that Eric J. Hightower, 36, of Alton, pleaded guilty on August 15, 2017, to a two-count indictment charging possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine in count one and possession with intent to distribute cocaine in count two

On count one, Hightower faces up to 40 years of imprisonment and/or fine up to \$5,000,000, four years of supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. On count two, Hightower faces up to 20 years of imprisonment and/or a fine up to \$1,000,000, three years of supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. Sentencing is scheduled for December 15, 2017.

On August 20, September 5, and December 5, 2016, the Alton Police Department used a confidential informant to purchase user quantities of crack cocaine and cocaine from Hightower, at his residence.

On December 6, 2016, the Alton Police Department obtained a search warrant to search Hightower's residence. Police seized 126 grams of cocaine and 58 grams of cocaine base, commonly called "crack." Hightower admitted the drugs found by the Alton Police Department were his and did not belong to anyone else.

Hightower also admitted that the drugs found in his home were intended for distribution.

The investigation which resulted in Hightower's arrest and conviction was conducted by the Alton Police Department. The Madison County States Attorney's Office was in consultation with the United States Attorney's Office in reference to this prosecution.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Deirdre A. Durborow.