

Drug dealer found guilty of bringing crack cocaine to Willard

An Akron man will be sentenced Tuesday after being found guilty of bringing crack cocaine from his hometown to the Willard area.

Damone L. Kirk, 26, had his bond revoked after the two-day trial last week in Huron County Common Pleas Court. The defendant was arrested Oct. 16 when he came to the sheriff's office to retrieve his property after METRICH, a 10-county drug task force, used a search warrant May 8 on Keefer Street in Willard.

Huron County Sheriff's Capt. Bob McLaughlin said officers seized a cell phone, about \$1,320 in cash found on Kirk, some undisclosed equipment and found slightly less than 28 grams of crack cocaine during the drug bust. The investigator estimated the street value — if sold by smaller amounts known as a “rock” — would be worth at least several thousand dollars, “depending on how you sell it.”

“(That’s) a good amount for our county,” the METRICH contact said. “He also had a firearm ... a 9 mm pistol.”

McLaughlin credited the special response team for being an essential part of the case.

“Because of their actions, he was convicted of the crime,” he said without elaborating.

Huron County Assistant Prosecutor Richard Woodruff was unavailable to comment on the case.

Investigators determined Kirk was bringing crack cocaine from Akron to Willard in April.

“Several people from that area are bringing the drug to Willard. Those people are under investigation by the Akron Police Department,” McLaughlin said in late October.

He suspects the people selling crack cocaine in Willard are using heroin users to sell for them, also saying several of those defendants already are serving prison terms for heroin-related crimes.

One of those people, Roger L. Tuttle Sr., 47, formerly of Willard, started serving an 11-month sentence at the Lorain Correctional Institution on Aug. 19. He was convicted locally of two counts of trafficking in heroin.

Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer DeLand, in early August, said Tuttle bought drugs from the same confidential informant on Aug. 20 and Sept. 6, 2007. McLaughlin, who has said Tuttle has “been selling heroin in the Willard area ... for a number of years,” started his investigation about June or July 2007 based on information from tipsters.

Originally published in the Norwalk Reflector on January 19 2009.