

The United States Attorney's Office

## Western District of Michigan

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### Press Release

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### MIDDLEVILLE MAN SENTENCED FOR STORING ILLEGAL WASTE

**THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2008 – GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN** – Michael Lee Babbitt, age 59 of Middleville, Michigan, was sentenced to six months home detention, 200 hours community service, restitution of \$28,266.98, a fine of \$6,000.00 and three years' probation for illegal storage and disposal of hazardous waste, U.S. Attorney Charles R. Gross announced today. Babbitt pleaded guilty on November 28, 2007, and was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Court Judge Janet T. Neff.

Babbitt owned and operated a furniture and metal parts stripping business called The Stripper, Inc., on South Division Street in Grand Rapids from 1987 to 2004. He used environmentally hazardous solvents, such as methylene chloride and toluene in large tanks as a part of his business. When he ceased business operations in 2004, Babbitt left behind numerous drums and tanks containing methylene chloride, toluene and lead. The materials were removed and properly disposed of under the supervision of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

U.S. Attorney Gross commended the joint investigative efforts in this case of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division and the Office of Criminal Investigations for the Michigan DEQ. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Julie Ann Woods.