



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2009
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**KEOKUK, IOWA MAN ARRESTED, CHARGED
WITH ARSON IN HAMILTON, ILL GROCERY STORE**

Peoria, Ill. – A Keokuk, Iowa man, Maheshbhai Rhamanbhai Patel, 34, made his initial appearance in federal court late this morning, following his arrest yesterday. Patel has been charged in a criminal complaint with arson related to a fire on Oct. 5, 2009, at Duck's Red Fox Grocery store in Hamilton, Illinois. U.S. Magistrate Judge John A. Gorman ordered Patel be detained in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service pending preliminary and detention hearings scheduled on Dec. 21 at 10:30 a.m. in federal court in Peoria, Illinois.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the complaint, prior to Oct. 5, 2009, Patel had entered into a contract to purchase Duck's Red Fox Grocery from its prior owners and had insurance on the property and inventory of the grocery store. During the early morning hours of Oct. 5, firefighters were called to extinguish a fire at the grocery store. The affidavit alleges that following the fire, investigators found four plastic gasoline containers partially filled with suspected gasoline and placed in different areas of the store.

If convicted, arson is punishable by a statutory minimum penalty of five years to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

The charge is the result of an investigation by the Hamilton Police Department; the Hamilton Fire Department; Illinois State Police; the Illinois State Fire Marshals Office, Division of Arson Investigation; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory R. Walters.

Members of the public are reminded that a complaint is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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