



Northwest HIDTA

Serving the needs of 14 Northwest Counties

Benton Clark Cowlitz	Franklin King	Kitsap Lewis	Pierce Skagit	Snohomish Spokane	Thurston Whatcom Yakima
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January-April 2009

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Northwest HIDTA Annual Report by CIS Dustin Baungard

Each year, as part of the Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) Performance Management Process, Northwest HIDTA prepares an Annual Report conveying the outputs and outcomes of its initiatives for the previous calendar year. The annual outputs are reported in 14 core tables that convey information in a variety of categories including drug trafficking organizations, drug seizures, asset seizures, clandestine labs, training, and intelligence system outputs. The 14 core tables are standardized throughout the HIDTA program and all HDTAs report using the same reporting standards and methodology. The Annual Report for calendar year 2008 was approved by the Northwest HIDTA executive board on March 11th and was submitted to ONDCP on May 15th. The following are some highlights from the Northwest HIDTA Annual Report for calendar year 2008:

Northwest HIDTA initiatives identified a total of 135 drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) operating with the Northwest HIDTA area of responsibility. Of these, 77 (57 percent) were either disrupted or dismantled. Of the 77 DTOs disrupted or dismantled, 56 (73 percent) were either international or multi-state in scope, demonstrating a strong focus on larger, more complex investigations.

In calendar year 2008, Northwest HIDTA initiatives seized an estimated wholesale value of over \$1.6 billion dollars in illicit drugs. A significant majority of the illicit drugs seized were in the form of marijuana plants; approximately 469,000 marijuana plants were seized by Northwest HIDTA initiatives in calendar year 2008. Additionally, approximately \$22.7 million dollars in drug related cash and assets were seized from drug trafficking organizations. By comparing the value of drugs and drug related assets to the Northwest HIDTA budget, Northwest HIDTA achieved a remarkable return on investment of \$542 dollars for every HIDTA budget dollar expended.

Northwest HIDTA continues to play a leading role in assisting the law enforcement, prosecution, and investigative support initiatives with their information sharing and training needs. In 2008, Northwest HIDTA processed 34,279 deconflictions, provided analytical support to 797 investigations, and provided 24,679 hours of training to 1,354 students.

This report is specially prepared for the ONDCP High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program Edited by Theresa Blahato

Surge Operations in the Belltown Neighborhood of Seattle

By CIS Kathryn Rodriguez

Beginning March 1, 2009, Seattle Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with the assistance of Seattle Police Department (SPD) began the first “surge” operation in the Belltown area of Seattle, Washington. The focus of the “surge” is to pinpoint the areas where there is a high volume of drug and gang activity, and dismantle or disrupt the organization while gathering intelligence on the structure of the organization.

This surge is specific to a group of Hondurans who took over the cocaine trade in the Belltown area. Information gleaned from ICE and SPD investigation, agents and officers determined that this group is possibly one cell in a much larger organization.

It is unknown at this time how this operation will affect the Belltown drug trade; however, a similar group is functioning in the Ballard area of the city. Detectives are working to track down the remaining 22 suspects. SPD reported that many in custody refuse to provide information on their whereabouts as they fear the drug lords might retaliate and kill their families in Honduras.

The surge ended April 11, 2009 with 52% of the members arrested (30 out of 52). Out of the 30 members, 3 are juvenile illegal immigrants, 3 are on ICE detainers, 2 are U.S. citizens, and 22 are illegal immigrants. The criminal dispositions of those arrested are unknown at this time.

TRAINING SCHEDULE

The NW HIDTA coordinates with the National Guard Midwest Counterdrug Training Center (MCTC), National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to present these courses.

There is not cost to the attendees or their agencies, except for per diem, if applicable.

The courses are open to federal, state, and local law enforcement officers, criminal intelligence analysts, program analysts, and military personnel assigned to counter-drug activities.

For additional information on these courses please contact Bob Wicklund or Neclisa Floyd at (206) 352-3600.

DATE	COURSE	PROVIDER	LOCATION
5/4-5/8/2009	High Risk Event Planning Level 1	MCTC	Richland
5/4-5/8/2009	Criminal Intelligence Training	WASPC	Wenatchee
5/11-5/15/2009	Connecting the Dots (Intelligence for LE practitioners)	MCTC	Marysville
5/20-5/21/2009	Operation HEMISPHERE	Houston HIDTA	DEA Seattle
6/2-6/4/2009	Informant Development and Management	MCTC	Spokane
6/8-6/12/2009	RAID	NDIC	NW HIDTA
6/11-6/12/2009	Advanced Vehicle Contraband Concealment	MCTC	Clarkston
6/15-6/19/2009	Interview and Interrogation	MCTC	Richland
6/17/2009	RISSIntel/RISSafe	WSIN/HIDTA	NW HIDTA
6/22-6/24/2009	Hidden Assets in Commercial Vehicles	DEA	Kelso
6/22-6/26/2009	Statement Analysis	MCTC	Richland
7/7-7/9/2009	Introduction to Intelligence	MCTC	Tacoma
8/4-8/6/2009	Video Techniques for LE	MCTC	Spokane
9/10-9/11/2009	Conspiracies	MCTC	Spokane
9/28-10/1/2009	Canine Narcotics Operations	MCTFT	Wapato
10/26-0/30/2009	CADRE Clan Lab	CADRE	WSP Fire Training Academy



Director's Message by Dave Rodriguez

The Northwest HIDTA is enormously proud that Chief Gil Kerlikowske, Seattle Police

Department, has been nominated by the President to be the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy also known as the Drug Czar. Chief Kerlikowske has been Chief of Police since August 2000, and has distinguished himself as an innovative law enforcement leader in our community. He is a member of the Northwest HIDTA Executive Board and also serves on numerous other Boards and Committees. I would note that I serve with him on the Seattle University Criminal Justice Advisory Committee. (See attached photo)



The 2009 Omnibus Bill has been signed by the President and the National HIDTA Program is funded at \$234,000,000, an increase of \$4 million from the 2008 appropriation. I am certain this is due to the HIDTA program demonstrating results through the Performance Management Process (PMP), and the recognition by members of Congress of its value and contribution to the National Drug Strategy. The award letters for the remainder of 2009 base funding should be received by mid May.

I would also note that we have a new Chair of the Executive Board, Sheriff Ken Irwin, Yakima Sheriff's Office and a new Vice Chair, Special Agent in Charge Arnold Moorin, DEA. Our Annual Report was reviewed and approved by the Executive Board at our last meeting. The results of our efforts for 2008 are impressive. (Please see enclosed article.)

Finally on April 22nd, PMP training was conducted at the NW HIDTA for several Initiatives that will be entering their data directly into the PMP database. Eventually every HIDTA Initiative will be trained to access the PMP directly.

Investigative Support Center Update by Theresa P. Blahato, ISC Manager

The Investigative Support Center (ISC) continues to work major investigations and support local and national HIDTA initiatives. Several projects are currently underway – the Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE), the Gangs Project, and the Tribal Lands Project. The DHE aims are identifying all crimes and all threat involving the interstate highway system. The Gangs Project is a multi-agency initiative that looks to documenting gang activity in the state in

order to effectively disrupt and dismantle their illegal activities. The Tribal Lands Project looks to highlight criminal activity taking place in and through Indian Country. The NW HIDTA plans to prepare two reports on Gang Activity and Tribal Lands in the future.

Prevention/Treatment Initiative

By Steve Freng, Manager

Effective substance abuse prevention strategies must be data-driven, although accurate and detailed information regarding drug use on the part of children and adolescents can sometimes be difficult to obtain. Fortunately, the State of Washington conducts the *Healthy Youth Survey* (HYS) every two years in October, providing a wealth of information about drug, alcohol and tobacco use as well as safety and violence, gangs, gambling, physical activity, suicide and other health risk behaviors. Conducted collaboratively by the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Departments of Health, Social and Health Services, and Community Trade and Economic Development, the Family Policy Council and the Liquor Control Board, the HYS in 2008 surveyed 211,244 students from 1,200 schools operating in 234 districts. The anonymous voluntary survey is taken by students in grades six, eight, 10 and 12 and, as it has been conducted since 2002, provides information on trends over time as well as a snapshot of current behaviors.

Overall, drug use rates haven't changed significantly since the last survey was conducted in 2006. Yet, there is still cause for concern. For instance, approximately 10% of students in 10th and 12th grade say they used a prescription pain medication to get high in the 30 days preceding the survey. Among the other findings:

- One in five students in 12th grade report being drunk or high in school in the past year.
- One percent of students in the 6th grade, 8% of students in the 8th grade (a significant increase from 2006), 20% of students in the 10th grade and 23% of students in the 12th grade report smoking marijuana in the past 30 days.
- Three percent of students in the 6th grade, 12% of students in the 8th grade, 31% of students in the 10th grade and 45% of students in the 12th grade report having ever smoked marijuana.
- Nine percent of students in the 8th grade, 20% of students in the 10th grade and 25% of students in the 12th grade report the use of any illicit drug in the past 30 days.
- 23 percent of students in the 6th grade, 26% of students in the 8th grade, 33% of students in the 10th grade and 39% of students in the 12th grade say that drugs are easy to obtain.
- Thirty two percent of students in the 6th grade, 34% of students in the 8th grade, 36% of students in the 10th grade and 43% percent of students in the 12th grade do not consider drug use to be a risky behavior.

The survey illustrates in very definitive terms that students who use drugs often don't do well in school and are more likely to disengage or even drop out, and that when students are not getting their needs met – specifically in the area of substance abuse – they are less likely to succeed academically. Clearly, much remains to be done with regard to substance abuse prevention, for reasons that are fundamentally important to the future of our youth and ultimately, to all of us.

If you have questions or comments regarding the Northwest HIDTA Prevention/Treatment Initiative, Steve Freng can be contacted at 206.352.3603 or sfreng@nw.hidta.org.

Initiative News

Northwest HIDTA Border Task ForceBureau of Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE)

Canadian-based United Nations (UN) Gang leader Clayton Roueche, who oversaw large-scale drug smuggling activity between the United States and Canada, pled guilty in federal court to conspiring to export cocaine, importing marijuana and engaging in money laundering, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)/ Northwest HIDTA Border Task Force and the Drug Enforcement Administration/Northwest HIDTA Integrated Task Force 2. Roueche was indicted by a federal grand jury in October 2007, while he was living in Canada. In May 2008, Roueche traveled to Mexico, but was denied entry by Mexican authorities. The plane on which Roueche was traveling had a scheduled stop over in Dallas and he was immediately arrested by ICE agents at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport on May 19, 2008.

Roueche conspired with others to export cocaine from the United States into Canada and to import B.C. Bud marijuana into the United States. He admitted to transporting and delivering cash proceeds from the illegal drug sales. Roueche's sentencing date is set for September 18, 2009. He could face a minimum sentence of 10 years to a maximum of life in prison.

In another investigation of a Canadian truck driver and drug Hells Angels Outlaw Motorcycle Gang, Robert Shannon was sentenced to 20 years in prison and five years of supervised release, following a long-term investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Shannon operated a cross-border smuggling operation that moved B.C. Bud marijuana south from Canada and returned cocaine north through the United States. The drugs were concealed in hollowed out logs, within the false walls of cargo

containers, and in shipments of landscaping bark.

ICE agents arrested Shannon in June 2008 along with Devron D. Quast from Abbotsford, British Columbia, after the two men came to the United States to discuss a potential deal with an undercover federal agent. In late 2008, both men pled guilty to conspiracy charges of cocaine and marijuana distribution, and money laundering. Quast was responsible for the transportation for the smuggling operations, while Shannon was responsible for providing the drugs.

This investigation has resulted in the seizure of more than 1,700 pounds of cocaine, 7,000 pounds of "B.C. Bud" and about \$3.5 million. Thirty-nine defendants have been charged in connection with the investigation.

Richard Jansen, the owner of a trucking company in British Columbia pled guilty in federal court to charges of conspiracy to distribute marijuana, following a long-term investigation by ICE, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Snohomish County Regional Drug Task Force. Jansen was arrested by federal authorities in June 2008. According to his plea agreement, he admitted to transporting nearly 350 pounds of B.C. Bud into the United States on June 5, 2008, as a member of a large drug smuggling organization. As the owner of Scorpion Transport Services, Jansen was responsible for driving his trucks across the border and smuggling cocaine into Canada and B.C. Bud into the United States. The smugglers concealed the drugs by hiding them inside false walls of cargo containers, within loads of commercial lumber and beauty bark, and inside large PVC pipes stowed within a propane tanker.

ICE estimates that more \$3.5 million, 1,700

pounds of cocaine, and 7,000 pounds of B.C. Bud have been seized during the investigation of this drug trafficking organization.

U.S. Border agents seized nearly a ton B.C. Bud marijuana stashed in a secret compartment of a cattle trailer at the Sumas Port of Entry. The semi-truck, full of beef cattle, arrived at the border on its way to Stanwood, but an X-ray device revealed inconsistencies in the trailer. After unloading the cattle, agents shoveled through the manure and found false panels in the floor and hockey bags containing a total 1,746 pounds of marijuana.

Edwin R. Fuller of Cloverdale, British Columbia, Canada, pled guilty in U.S. District Court in Seattle to Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute. On February 17, 2009, Fuller attempted to smuggle 1,746 pounds of marijuana into the United States from Canada, concealed in the floor of a cattle trailer.

When sentenced by U.S. District Judge Thomas S. Zilly on July 17, 2009, Fuller faces a mandatory minimum five years in prison, up to 40 years in prison and a \$2,000,000 fine.

The case was investigated by Customs and Border Protection (CBP), ICE, and DEA.

Leroy Carr of Federal Way, Washington was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Seattle to 14 years in prison and five years of supervised release for Possession of Cocaine with Intent to Distribute. Carr was arrested September 15, 2007, about 100 yards south of the Sumas Port of Entry by ICE personnel.

According to court records and testimony at trial, Carr had come to the attention of border agents on numerous occasions, each time in the possession of large amounts of cash and tools commonly used by smugglers, including night vision goggles and a GPS system containing coordinates to a well-known smuggling trail. On August 7, 2007, Carr contacted ICE agents at the border claiming that he had stashed 31 kilograms of

cocaine in two blue backpacks near the border. Carr indicated the drugs were hidden in the brush near the entrance to a Boy Scout camp. Carr wanted the ICE agents to put out a press release saying the government had seized the drugs, so that the organized criminal group he works for would not retaliate against him. On August 21, 2007, a Boy Scout Ranger called the Northwest Regional Drug Task Force and reported two blue backpacks he had just found near the entrance to a Boy Scout camp that appeared to contain cocaine. The backpacks were dry and in good shape. Tests showed they contained 31 kilograms of cocaine. Carr smuggled drugs for the Hell Angels Outlaw Motorcycle Gang.

The case was investigated by ICE, the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, and the Northwest Drug Task Force.

Yakima County HIDTA Task Force

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Law Enforcement Against Drugs (LEAD)

DEA and LEAD continue to work cooperatively on Operation Green Jam, which targeted an international drug trafficking organization that used vineyards as canopies for their outdoor marijuana grow operations. Approximately 146 suspects have been identified, 65 individuals have been arrested with more arrests anticipated in the future. This drug trafficking organization operates in Texas, Georgia, California, Missouri, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Thus far, a total of 26 search warrants have been executed, 44 tons of marijuana have been confiscated, along with quantities of packaged marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and firearms.



Operation Green Jam: Left Photo - Marijuana growing beneath a grape canopy. Right Photo - Marijuana processing room.

Source: LEAD

Tacoma Regional HIDTA Task Force

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Detectives seized marijuana plants from three residences during simultaneous raids early Monday morning - one on Timber Court in Thurston County east of Lacey; and two more on Lenox Court and Coleman Avenue in west Olympia. The raid at the home on Coleman Avenue yielded more than 1,000 marijuana plants. The raids were under the jurisdiction of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Tacoma Regional HIDTA Task Force, Washington State Patrol, and the Thurston County Narcotics Task Force.

Use of homes in residential neighborhoods for large-scale indoor marijuana grows is on the rise in Washington State, according to local law enforcement. Neighbors reported that no one seemed to live at either home, but people periodically showed up to keep up appearances and do regular maintenance by mowing the lawns or shoveling snow from the driveways. The home on Coleman Avenue is owned by Quan Truong of Fort Meyers, Florida, according to the assessor's office. He purchased the home in January 2007 for \$260,000. The home that was raided on Timber Court is owned by Vincent Do of Irvine, California, according to assessor's office data. He purchased the home in August 2007 for \$319,000.

Tacoma Police Department

The Tacoma Police Department (TPD) Special Investigations Section concluded a narcotics investigation with the assistance of the FBI Violent Crimes Task Force and the DEA Tacoma Resident Office. The operation which involved the execution of two search warrants and a "knock and talk," resulted in seven arrests on 12 felony charges, \$304,400 worth in seized narcotics, \$26,328 in U.S. Currency, two firearms, and one vehicle valued at \$28,000.

TPD concluded this narcotics investigation with the service of two search warrants on residences involved in the trafficking of MDMA (Ecstasy). The

two search warrants yielded the following results: the arrest of five subjects, the seizure of 3,000 MDMA pills with an estimated street value of \$45,000; 28.9 grams of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$1,000; 1 gram of methamphetamine with an estimated value of \$1,000; \$19,357 in U.S. Currency, and a firearm valued at \$500.

The subjects agreed identify their Ecstasy source of supply. They also agreed to order 12 Boats (One Boat comprises 1,000 pills) for a total of 12,000 pills at a price of \$25,200. They also agreed to participate in a buy bust under the direction of Tacoma Police SID personnel. The source of supply would be coming from the Snohomish County area.

A pre-operational brief was conducted with Tacoma Police SID personnel and members of the DEA Tacoma Resident Office. Through further investigation that day, officers learned that the middleman, who lives in Tacoma was about to conduct the transaction. Surveillance units observed a blue Chevrolet Envoy pickup the middleman at his residence. The registered owner of the vehicle was from the Lynnwood area and confirmed prior information. The Envoy was followed from the middleman's residence to a restaurant. The passenger got out of the vehicle and to carry out the purchase. Officers and agents from TPD and DEA conducted a mobile take down and placed all subjects into custody without incident. The operation yielded the following results: the arrest of two subjects, the seizure of 12,000 Ecstasy pills with an estimated street value of \$180,000; \$261 in U.S. Currency, and a vehicle valued at \$28,000.

Agents and officers conducted a follow up "knock and talk" the residence located in Lynnwood, Washington. The following was seized at the Lynnwood address: 417.6 grams of powder cocaine with an estimated street value of \$41,760; 297 grams of methamphetamine with an estimated street value of \$35,640 to \$6,710 in U.S. Currency.

HIDTA Integrated Task Force

DEA HIDTA Task Force 2 – Transportation Group
Operation Green Reaper: A federal jury in Seattle convicted Thiet Van Tran, the owner of Scitek Garden Supply, an Auburn indoor-gardening shop, of conspiracy for his involvement in a lucrative indoor marijuana-growing network in South King County. Tran, 41 was found guilty in U.S. District Court of conspiracy to manufacture marijuana and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Sentencing is set for May 15, when he could face at least 10 years behind bars and forfeiture of money and assets. Tran was part of a 13-month federal investigation called "Operation Green Reaper." Agents and officers arrested a dozen other people and seized some 15,000 marijuana plants. The other 12 people have already pleaded guilty to federal marijuana charges. Tran used Scitek Garden Supply, to provide equipment, seedlings, supplies, and advice to marijuana growers and laundered up to \$1 million in drug money. Over the 13-month investigation, agents and officers shut down 27 home-based growing operations from Everett to Puyallup. The equipment and grow materials were traced to Scitek and other garden supply stores.

Spokane County Regional Task Force

Spokane County Regional Task Force
 Spokane County Regional Task Force (SCRTF) culminated a three year investigation with a takedown in February 2009. The investigation named Operation GreenTree targeted an organization that was the source of supply for eight drug trafficking organizations in the Spokane area, Idaho, and Montana. Twenty-six individuals were indicted, 24 people were arrested with more arrests expected. Three individuals were armed during arrests. A total of 27 firearms were seized from this violent organization. Task force officers served 28 federal search warrants and seized four marijuana grows totaling 1,854 marijuana plants, 5 pounds of processed marijuana, ¼ ounce of cocaine, 1 pound of psilocybin mushrooms, and 15

MDMA tablets. SCRTF also seized \$512,762; 23 real properties with a net equity of \$1.32 million, 30 vehicles, 4 boats, 4 All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and 2 tractors. The total value all seizures is estimated at \$2.43 million. Operation GreenTree had a significant impact on the availability of marijuana in the area. After the takedown, task force officers received reports that there was no marijuana available for purchase.



Operation GreenTree: Firearms and money seizures.

Clark-Skamania Narcotics Task Force

Sylvester Santacruz Hernandez of Vancouver, Washington, pled guilty today in U.S. District Court in Tacoma to the felony offense of distribution of methamphetamine. The offense is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment and a \$1 million fine. According to court documents, Sylvester Santacruz Hernandez was part of a drug trafficking family in the Vancouver, Washington area involved in the distribution of sizeable quantities of methamphetamine.

Other family members already prosecuted and convicted in this case, and who are currently serving sentences of imprisonment are Luciano Santacruz HERNANDEZ of Vancouver, Washington and Francisco Santacruz Hernandez of Vancouver, Washington. Convicted lower level distributors included Lisa Leland and Arthur Ewing, both of Vancouver, Washington.

Sylvester Santacruz Hernandez remained a federal fugitive until he was apprehended during the fall of 2008. In pleading guilty, Sylvester Santacruz Hernandez admitted making two separate methamphetamine deliveries to Leland during 2006.

Sentencing is set for May 14, 2009 before U.S. District Judge Ronald B. Leighton.

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Portland, Oregon; Camas, Washington Police Department, and the Clark Skamania Drug Task Force.

In a separate investigation, Jesus Valencia-Reuvelta of Ridgefield, Washington, was found guilty of Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute, and being an Alien in Possession of a Firearm. Sentencing is set for May 14, 2009 before U.S. District Judge Thomas S. Zilly. Valencia-Reuvelta faces up to five years in prison for each conviction.

According to court records, law enforcement became aware of Valencia-Reuvelta's Ridgefield address while investigating a large marijuana grow in Clark County. On August 14, 2008, following a search of that grow location, investigators arrived at Valencia-Reuvelta's home. Valencia-Reuvelta agreed to allow officers to search the residence. Inside they found three large unzipped duffel bags containing marijuana and four firearms. One of the guns, a loaded Sterling Arms, Mark II .380 caliber handgun was found next to a photo album with pictures of Valencia-Reuvelta and \$5,100 cash.

Initially, Valencia-Reuvelta told investigators that the marijuana had arrived from California about three days earlier. Valencia-Reuvelta indicated he was in the country illegally, having crossed the border from Mexico in January 2007.

The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Clark-Skamania County Drug Task Force.

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Narcotics Task Force

In January 2009, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Narcotics Task Force (CWNTF) detectives developed information that the owner of a restaurant was selling cocaine out of the business. This information

was confirmed with the purchased up to an ounce of cocaine. The drug purchase led to a search warrant for the business and the owner's residence. A quantity of cocaine was found along with a large sum of money. The suspect agreed to work with the task force, and arranged several purchases from his supplier.

In February 2009, task force agents executed search warrants at three residences in Clark County/Vancouver for commercial indoor marijuana growing operations. Two of the residences were active grow sites with 1,600 marijuana plants. The third residence had been torn down. All three houses had power diversions to escape paying eclectic bills for the grow operations. Information at one grow led to a search warrant for a storage locker, where over \$100,000 in commercial grow equipment was seized for forfeiture.

Skamania County placed a new deputy into the high school as an Undercover (U/C). The U/C officer was able to purchase marijuana from six students. This led to a search warrant where 146 grams of marijuana was seized. Based on the information developed, the target of the search warrant was the largest supplier of marijuana at the high school.

In late March, the drug task force served a search warrant at an apartment in east Vancouver. Officers recovered a kilogram brick of cocaine, 2.5 pounds of methamphetamine, 1.5 pounds of marijuana, and approximately \$6,000 in cash. Agents also recovered two rifles and three handguns, two of which were stolen in burglaries. The street value of the drugs exceeded \$80,000. Task force officers also arrested three Mexican nationals who were illegally in the country.

In Operation Round-Up, CWNTF agents assisted by numerous state and local agencies concluded the latest phase of a long term investigation into the importation and distribution of heroin in the Longview/Kelso area.

During the course of the investigation agents coordinated drug purchases from 20 people, searched multiple residences and hotel rooms and identified numerous additional drug dealers responsible for putting heroin in the hands of local users. This phase of the investigation involved the coordinated arrest of several key local dealers and the arrest of one of their suppliers who is currently living in the Vancouver, Washington, area. Task force agents have obtained arrest warrants for several additional suspects who remain at large.

Agents executed arrest warrants in the Kelso/Longview area for 13 people accused of selling heroin. Six of those people were located and taken into custody. During their arrests additional heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine, and diverted prescription medications were recovered. In addition to serving these arrest warrants, agents located and arrested two additional subjects accused of selling drugs – one heroin and the other methamphetamine. Two additional subjects were arrested on unrelated misdemeanor warrants. One of those subjects was also charged with drug crimes after they were found to be in possession of heroin and diverted prescription pills.

During the course of this investigation, which began in November of 2008, agents purchased and/or seized over 900 grams of heroin, over 45 grams of methamphetamine, and smaller amounts of cocaine, pills and marijuana. Several cars and U.S. currency were also seized. Two arrests were made in Portland, Oregon, in cooperation with the Portland Police Bureau's Drug and Vice Division. Portland agents arrested six additional individuals on felony drug arrests in Oregon. The local arrests on April 15, 2009 was culminated in the "buy/bust" of a drug supplier in Vancouver, Washington, and a consent search of a nearby apartment where additional heroin and methamphetamine were seized.

Agencies participating in Wednesday's arrests include the Washington State Patrol, Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office, Kelso Police Department, Longview Police Department, Washington Department of Corrections and the Clark-Skamania

Drug Task Force.

Emerging Trend - Mimic Tablets

DEA Seattle Field Division submitted Oxycontin tablets (actually containing a mixture of heroin, caffeine, and lactose) to the DEA Western Laboratory (San Francisco, California) for analysis. The two tablets, 9 millimeters in diameter, with "OC" imprinted on one face and "80" on the opposite face, appeared to be OxyContin. The tablets had a green coating over a compressed, light brown powder. (Note: According to DEA Forensic Sciences, actual OxyContin tablets have a lighter green coating over a compressed white powder.) Analysis of the tablets indicated not oxycodone but rather a mixture heroin (11.6 milligrams/tablet), caffeine, and lactose. This is the first known submission of OxyContin mimic tablets containing heroin to the Western Laboratory. This submission reflects a continued trend toward mimic tablets.

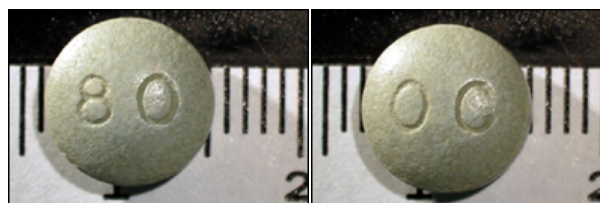
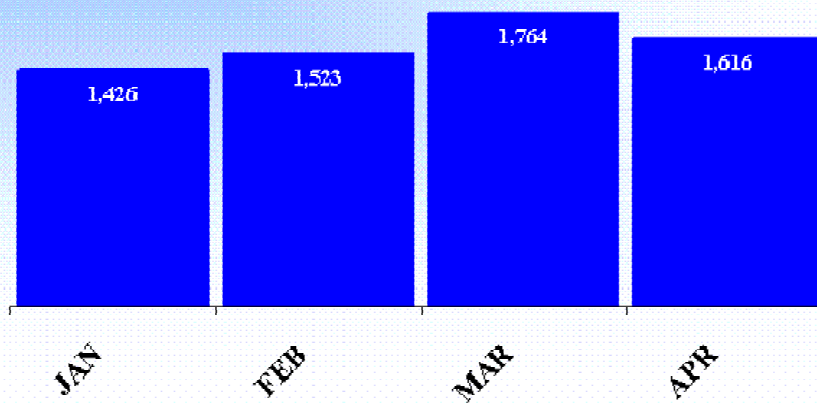


Photo of OxyContin Mimic Tablet
Source: DEA Microgram, March 2009

Watch Center Stats

2009 INQUIRIES



2009 Critical Events

