



# COMMANDERS MONTHLY

A MONTHLY REPORT OF OHIO'S TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

April 2009

*Commanders Monthly* serves as a vehicle for the Ohio Drug Task Force Commanders to share drug prevalence, monthly task force highlights, and trends in criminal activity within their jurisdictions. It is the hope that in sharing this information on investigations and arrests, task forces will be able to better determine trends and target the flow of illegal drugs and other criminal activity. The Ohio Task Force Commanders Association is funded in part with a federal Justice Assistance Grant.

## April Narratives: Drug Prevalence and Monthly Criminal Activity

### CLERMONT COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs continue to be heroin, pharmaceuticals, marijuana and MDMA. The unit has noted a decrease in the availability of both crack and powder cocaine. It appears as if the drugs of choice have now become heroin and pharmaceuticals, replacing both cocaine and methamphetamine.

On April 29, after a five-month investigation by the Clermont County Narcotics Unit, 16 subjects were indicted for drug related offenses. Indictments are as follows: eight counts of trafficking in drugs (F4); seven counts of trafficking in drugs (F5); two counts of possession of drugs (F5); three counts of trafficking in drugs (F3); four counts of conspiracy to trafficking in drugs (F4); and one count of intimidation of a victim in a criminal case (M1).

### COLUMBIANA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Current illegal drugs include heroin, crack, cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine. The task force is still seeing a large amount of heroin in the area. The price of cocaine has been increasing along with the price of marijuana. Methamphetamine is starting to become more prominent in the county.

The task force has received information that there is a red-P and anhydrous clandestine lab in the county. The task force has also received information that one or more subjects are using the "shake and bake" or "one pot" method.

### DART NORTHEAST HAMILTON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

DART has been making the usual street arrests for drug sales. The task force

made an arrest for a 35 pound marijuana delivery in one neighborhood.

### DELAWARE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST PUSHERS (LEAP) DRUG TASK FORCE

Current illegal drugs include marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin and pharmaceutical drugs. The task force has seen a significant increase in the availability of heroin and pharmaceutical drugs.

The task force, with the assistance of the Delaware County Sheriff's Office, Delaware Police Department, Sunbury Police Department, Powell Police Department, Genoa Township Police Department, Westerville Police Department and Delaware County Adult Court Services, conducted "Operation 420." Officers focused on serving arrest warrants upon individuals for drug-related offenses to include possession of marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, LSD and methamphetamine, as well as trafficking in marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy, heroin and pharmaceuticals. The operation was extremely successful yielding the arrests of 29 individuals. In addition, two indoor marijuana cultivation operations were dismantled during "Operation 420," yielding 168 plants.

### FAIRFIELD/HOCKING MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

Current illegal drugs include heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine.

The Major Crimes Unit conducted three search warrants on indoor grow operations in both Fairfield and Hocking Counties. This resulted in arrests on charges of cultivation and possession of weapons while under disability of previous drug trafficking offenses.

Detectives from the Major Crimes Unit also worked a joint investigation with Franklin County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Division in the arrest of a Pickerington resident who was an



upper-level cocaine trafficker. At the time of arrest, a search was conducted on the residence. Detectives recovered all of the following in a barbeque grill located on the back deck: 272 grams of cocaine; 48 grams of crack cocaine; and a loaded semi-automatic weapon.

The Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit continues to make arrests stemming from tracking pseudoephedrine sales and charging individuals over the limits on purchases at local pharmacies. This operation recently led to the seizure of approximately 14 grams of methamphetamine from one of those arrested on the misdemeanor charge.

#### **GRAND LAKE TASK FORCE**

Heroin is still on the rise in the area, with marijuana and cocaine remaining about the same. The task force has been active this month with pharmaceutical diversion cases and making two arrests.

#### **GREENE COUNTY AGENCIES FOR COMBINED ENFORCEMENT (ACE) TASK FORCE**

The primary drugs of choice in Greene County are crack cocaine and marijuana followed closely by heroin and powder cocaine. Methamphetamine, OxyContin, pharmaceutical drugs, psilocybin mushrooms and LSD are encountered frequently during street-level undercover purchases of drugs.

On April 22, the Greene County Agencies for Combined Enforcement (ACE) Task Force conducted the service of four search warrants with the assistance of the Xenia Police Division, Greene County Sheriff's Office, Fairborn Police Department, Beavercreek Police Department, Kettering Police Department and SWAT Team. The searches were conducted at: 1731 Wilbur Ave. in Fairborn; 3775 Indian Ripple Rd. in Beavercreek; 412 W. Dorothy Lane in Kettering; and 1596 Otoole Dr. in Xenia. The search warrants were obtained following a three-month investigation conducted by the task force involving a marijuana trafficking organization. Evidence obtained from the locations included but was not limited to: several pounds of marijuana; scales; more than \$18,000 in U.S. currency; two vehicles; several flat screen televisions; and criminal tools.

On April 24, members of ACE arrested a suspect from the Columbus area when he delivered approximately 17 pounds of marijuana to an address in Beavercreek. The suspect was associated with an address at 709 Chandler Dr. in Trotwood where a subsequent search warrant was served. Evidence obtained from the search included but was not limited to: two ounces of heroin; three ounces of cocaine; 57 bindles of cocaine; and approximately one pound of marijuana. This is a continuing investigation involving several major drug traffickers operating in Franklin, Greene and Montgomery Counties.

On April 29, ACE conducted the service of a search warrant at 3110 Mesmer Ave. in Dayton, with the assistance of Dayton Police Department Special Investigations Division. The search warrant was served as part of a continuing investigation involving a marijuana drug trafficking group operating in Greene and Montgomery Counties. Evidence obtained from

the locations included but was not limited to: 64 mature marijuana plants; equipment involved with the grow operation; one 1999 Chevy Truck; one 2007 Yamaha Motorcycle; two handguns; one shotgun; and criminal tools.

#### **LAWRENCE DRUG AND MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE**

Prevalent drugs continue to be prescription narcotics (many from Florida pain clinics), crack cocaine and marijuana.

Twenty-one defendants in prescription pain pill trafficking cases were indicted in late March with arrests made in March and April. Several of those defendants have pled guilty to their indictments.

During April, agents worked cases purchasing crack cocaine, prescription pills and marijuana. Indictments and arrests began in May with eight to ten targets taken into custody.

Also, a major drug trafficker that was a target of investigations and has been sought on an arrest warrant for a few years was arrested in Minnesota and will be extradited for trial.

On April 29, while working drug investigations, drug task forces were the first law enforcement personnel on the scene of an arson fire. The victim is the daughter of one of the task force personnel who remains in critical condition. Task force personnel have proven instrumental in compiling a compelling criminal case against the estranged suspect's husband.

#### **LORAIN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE**

Heroin continues to be the task force's number one problem, especially in the larger cities. Cocaine, crack cocaine and pharmaceutical drugs are serious problems as well. On average, the task force receives two leads on suspected pharmaceutical abuse every day.

While looking for a suspect on an unrelated case, officers came upon an indoor marijuana grow operation in which 20 fairly large plants were seized. What made this unique was that the operation was being run by an 80-year-old woman.

The task force sent a case to the prosecutor concerning a home health nurse that admitted stealing OxyContin from a patient's home. The task force also assisted the Sheriff's Office in preparing a case for trial that involved a jail inmate on work release who smuggled Duragesic patches into the jail and gave them to another inmate who nearly died of an overdose. The inmate pled guilty and is awaiting sentencing.

The task force is also conducting a joint investigation with the Westshore Enforcement Bureau concerning subjects involving Adderall prescriptions in two counties.

Finally, the patrol boat is in the water and operations have begun on Lake Erie for another summer as part of the Northern Border Initiative.

#### **MEDINA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE**

During the month of April, Medina County Drug Task Force did not see any new drug trends that were prevalent. Heroin

seems to be an increasing problem in the southeastern part of the county while numerous recent purchases of methamphetamine have been made. Trafficking and abuse of pharmaceutical drugs are still on the rise (Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet). Marijuana remains to be the most prevalent illicit drug with an increase of indoor marijuana grow operations, investigations and seizures.

#### **MEDWAY DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY**

The MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency continues to see a significant increase in the sales of heroin as well as an increase in marijuana and crack cocaine usage.

The task force has increased staff in the Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit and the case load continues to increase. The Unit continues to receive support from both pharmacies and physicians. The amount of intelligence received has also increased on a weekly basis.

MEDWAY would also like to thank Dennis Lowe, Dave Posten and others for the recent undercover narcotics school in Columbus. The task force was able to send three students and three role players and has heard nothing but positive reviews. MEDWAY appreciates all the hard work that goes into this type of training and would also like to thank NARCO and OTFCA for their continued support for this training.

#### **METRICH ENFORCEMENT UNIT**

The METRICH Enforcement Unit primarily sees cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin (both tar and powder), marijuana and diverted pharmaceuticals.

For the second time in less than six months, the Knox County Sheriff's Department raided a Kenyon College residence and arrested one student on drug trafficking charges. Further, large scale drug indictment sweeps have occurred in both Wyandot and Huron Counties.

Additionally, agencies throughout the 10-county METRICH region continue to struggle with budgetary concerns with several investigators having been (or are likely to be) pulled back to patrol. It remains unclear as to the impact of sustained personnel shortages on METRICH's ability to maintain current operational objectives.

#### **MULTI-AREA NARCOTICS (MAN) UNIT**

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction are marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and prescription drugs, mostly OxyContin and methadone. Marijuana remains consistent and crack cocaine is more prevalent than powder cocaine. Also, crystal meth has surfaced.

Arrests for April totaled 12 individuals. MAN Unit officers initiated 17 news cases this month and executed 10 search warrants. Four adults were arrested as a result of a meth lab in Bryan (Williams County); two children were in the home while the cook was in progress.

#### **NORTHERN OHIO LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE**

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction are cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, MDMA and pharmaceutical abuse drugs. There has been an increase in the availability of marijuana and cocaine; wholesale prices remain high.

During the month of April, the task force, which consists of federal, state and local law enforcement, initiated several investigations into traditional and gang-related narcotic trafficking organizations. These organizations are operating in the Cleveland area, along with multi-state jurisdictions. The task force has infiltrated these organizations utilizing informants and undercover agents and is currently administering two active Title III telephonic wire intercept investigations, targeting a multi-state cocaine/heroin organization along with a gang trafficking organization operating on the west side of Cleveland. It is anticipated that multiple arrests/search warrants are forthcoming relative to these investigations.

As a result of a Federal Title III narcotic investigation targeting the east side Cleveland traffickers, the task force executed several federal search/arrest warrants on April 15, resulting in the arrest of 15 defendants. All are awaiting their initial judicial appearances.

#### **OTTAWA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE**

The predominate street drugs in Ottawa County this month have been cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy and prescription drugs. The task force made numerous controlled buys involving marijuana and cocaine in Ottawa County.

The task force continues to assist Ohio BCI&I agents, Toledo DEA agents, Sandusky County Sheriff's Office and the Fremont Police Department with assistance during numerous drug investigations in Sandusky County. The primary focus of these investigations has been to target multi-ounce cocaine dealers in Sandusky County.

#### **SOUTHEAST AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (SEALE)**

Cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, marijuana and ecstasy are prevalent within the SEALE jurisdiction. In the month of April, the task force executed three search warrants and continued to make undercover drug buys from various individuals.

The task force executed a search warrant at a Maple Heights home as a result of the occupant selling crack cocaine and ecstasy. Several controlled buys were made from the home and one occupant was identified as an escaped prisoner from Illinois Department of Correction. The male was on his third year of a six-year sentence and was working outside the prison yard on a detail in December 2008. The male was arrested during the search warrant and returned to Illinois.

Controlled buys of crack cocaine from two parolees ended after detectives from the task force executed search warrants at both of the males' homes. Both males were recently released from prison for drug trafficking and were on active parole. The first controlled buy took place the same day one of the males was

released from the half way house pre-release center. Detectives seized two vehicles, over \$5,000 in cash and over two ounces of powder cocaine, as well as crack cocaine from the males.

Heroin seems to be readily available and the task force has seen a spike in overdose cases. The task force has interviewed several addicts and identified several area suppliers. A search warrant was executed at the home of one of the dealers responsible for selling the heroin that caused the overdoses. Several bundles of heroin were located and the supplier was identified.

The task force continues to work with members of the Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force on a major supplier in the Cleveland area. Several purchases of crack cocaine have been made and the task force is continuing to identify the male's source of supply.

#### **SOUTHEASTERN NARCOTICS TEAM (SENT) TASK FORCE**

Drugs currently available include methamphetamine, crack cocaine, cocaine, marijuana, Tramadol, Percocet, OxyContin and Xanax.

As a direct result of information provided by an informant, SENT agents coordinated an operation with the Zanesville Police Department, which resulted in the arrest of three individuals on 13 counts, including felony possession and trafficking. Recovered were 100 grams of cocaine, more than 20 grams of crack, marijuana and more than 300 pharmaceuticals, all of which are controlled substances. Cambridge activity includes the arrest of four individuals on six counts of trafficking, felony possession, receiving stolen property (a .40 caliber handgun from Franklin County) as well as conveyance of illegal drugs into a jail; \$500 in drug money receipts were also seized. A total of five handguns were removed from the street.

#### **STARK COUNTY METROPOLITAN NARCOTICS UNIT**

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction are marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs.

A knock and talk resulted in the seizure of 25 marijuana plants and grow equipment; charges are pending. Another investigation led to the search of a residence where four individual baggies of marijuana were found; this led to a search of a vehicle which netted two pounds of marijuana, scales and baggies. The individual was arrested and charged with trafficking in marijuana, possession of marijuana and tampering with evidence.

A search warrant was served at an illegal gambling operation in which 29 skill game machines and over \$6,000 in cash were seized; charges are pending on the operators of this business.

Four search warrants concluded a drug investigation. Two vehicles, household furnishings and other items were seized. The suspect is currently at-large.

Finally, a pharmaceutical investigation into an aid stealing prescription medicine from a patient resulted in charges pending on one individual.

#### **SUMMIT COUNTY DRUG UNIT**

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction include cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine (glass), MDMA (ecstasy), GHB, Ketamine, OxyContin and other pharmaceuticals.

During April, interdiction efforts resulted in the seizure of seven parcels of marijuana with a combined weight of 114 pounds and 500 grams of Ketamine. This represents a street value in excess of \$198,200.

On April 27, the Summit County Drug Unit received a Commendation from the Summit County Council for its continued successful work in dismantling drug trafficking organizations and locating methamphetamine sites.

#### **TRUMBULL-ASHTABULA GROUP (TAG)**

The illegal drugs most prevalent in Trumbull and Ashtabula Counties are marijuana, cocaine, heroin and prescription drugs. Occasionally, the task force will receive information regarding hallucinogenic drugs. On the average, one meth lab a month is being discovered.

Heroin continues to be a major problem throughout the counties. The task force is involved in multiple investigations involving more popular drugs and continues its collaboration with other law enforcement agencies.

#### **U.S. 23 PIPELINE MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE**

Drugs prevalent in the area continue to be crack cocaine, heroin, cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and prescription drugs.

On April 16, officers seized a methamphetamine lab from the trunk of car at a residence in Highland County; three suspects were taken into custody.

On April 21, officers served a search warrant on a crack house in Chillicothe. Whitney McConnell and Dwayne Foster were taken into custody after over ½ ounce of crack cocaine was seized. McConnell and Foster were both charged with tampering with evidence in March after flushing the drugs.

Task force officers along with officers from Ross, Fayette and Vinton Counties served a search warrant in Vinton County on April 24. This warrant was a follow-up to the investigation of thefts in Ross, Fayette, and Highland Counties. Officers seized zero-turn mowers, John Deere Gators, four wheelers, trailers, a go cart, a log splitter, numerous power tools and over 60 firearms. The value of recovered property was over \$100,000. Two suspects, Michael Certain and Randy Smith, are currently in custody; additional indictments are expected.

#### **WEST CENTRAL OHIO CRIME TASK FORCE**

During the month of April, the West Central Ohio Crime Task Force continued to make numerous controlled drug buys consisting of marijuana, crack, cocaine and ecstasy.

The task force executed three search warrants seizing drugs, money and weapons this month and also made two drug presentations to local organizations and schools.

**WESTSHORE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (WEB)**

The street drug unit prosecuted cases involving marijuana, methamphetamine, powder cocaine, crack cocaine.

The pharmaceutical diversion unit prosecuted cases involving Vicodin, Percocet, Xanax, OxyContin and Tramadol.

Pharmaceutical cases continue to increase with a recent case involving a 28-year-old female seeing 47 different doctors, filling the scripts at 34 different pharmacies and using 25 different addresses.



## OTFCA Members Reporting in April 2009

*Clermont County Drug Task Force*

Coordinator Bill Williams

*Columbiana County Drug Task Force*

Detective Dan Downard

*DART Northeast Hamilton County Drug Task Force*

Coordinator Leo Robinson

*Delaware County Law Enforcement Against Pushers (LEAP) Drug Task Force*

Operations Supervisor Detective Sergeant Randy Pohl

*Fairfield/Hocking Major Crimes Unit*

Commander Eric Brown

*Grand Lake Task Force*

Lieutenant Steve Stienecker

*Greene County Agencies for Combined Enforcement (ACE) Task Force*

Commander Bruce May

*Lawrence Drug and Major Crime Task Force*

Commander Timothy W. Sexton

*Lorain County Drug Task Force*

Captain Dennis E. Cavanaugh

*Medina County Drug Task Force*

Agent in Charge Michael Barnhardt

*MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency*

Director David Smith

*METRICH Enforcement Unit*

Chief Philip Messer

*Multi-Area Narcotics (MAN) Unit*

Major Douglas Engel

*Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force*

Lieutenant Pat Stephens

*Ottawa County Drug Task Force*

Detective Douglas L. St. Clair

*Southeast Area Law Enforcement Task Force (SEALE)*

Detective Brian Byard

*Southeastern Narcotics Team Task Force (SENT)*

Commander Bernie Beltz

*Stark County Metropolitan Narcotics Unit*

Sergeant John Oliver

*Summit County Drug Unit*

Captain Hylton E. Baker

*Trumbull-Ashtabula Group (TAG)*

Commander Jeff Orr

*U.S. 23 Pipeline Major Crimes Task Force*

Major Randy Sanders

*West Central Ohio Crime Task Force*

Sergeant Matt Treglia

*Westshore Enforcement Bureau (WEB)*

Special Agent in Charge Jeff Capretto