



COMMANDERS MONTHLY

A MONTHLY REPORT OF OHIO'S TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

February 2010

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.

February Narratives: Drug Prevalence and Monthly Criminal Activity

CENTRAL OHIO DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (CODE)

The Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force has started a drug diversion unit. We are currently in the process of training and getting this program up and running. We would like to thank Warren County for their hospitality in letting our agent come and work with your diversion agents.

CODE agents along with the Muskingum County Sheriff's Office conducted a traffic stop on a semi tractor trailer from Interstate 70. During the stop, a K-9 alerted the presence of narcotics on the trailer. Agents searched the trailer and found approximately 921 pounds of marijuana. Charges against the driver of the semi are pending and this investigation continues.

CLERMONT COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The unit continues to see a substantial amount of heroin, pharmaceuticals, cocaine and marijuana. They have seen an increase in the number of individuals securing products for manufacturing of meth.

FAIRFIELD-HOCKING MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

The drugs most prevalent within our jurisdiction are: heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine.

The Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit has investigated seven methamphetamine labs to date in both Fairfield and Hocking Counties. Two of these clandestine labs produced flash fires which resulted in serious injuries to the suspects involved. Five of those labs, which were in Hocking County, resulted in five arrests. Laboratories were located both indoors and outdoors in all locations. As reported in the past these investigations continue to stem from numerous individuals connected by different levels of participation in the production



GRAND LAKE TASK FORCE

Grand Lake continues to see a large amount of marijuana in the area. They have also seen a steady amount of heroin. On February 19th, a search warrant was served on a residence near St. Mary's where a methamphetamine lab was found. A one-pot cook was discovered. One male, Keith Parsons from St. Mary's, was arrested and charged. Three children and an adult female were also living in the home. More charges are expected against other individuals in this case.

LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

The predominant street drugs in Lake County this month has been heroin and marijuana. Lake County Narcotics has conducted three search warrants. One search warrant resulted in the seizure of approximately 9 pounds of marijuana from a residence. Another search warrant, after a controlled delivery of approximately 10 pounds of marijuana, resulted in the arrest of the receiver. The receiver contacted the original party for whom the package was intended, resulting in his arrest. The last search warrant was a residence involved in trafficking heroin. Interestingly, the individuals were actually smoking the heroin off foil. In this area heroin users predominantly either snort or shoot.

A small 13 plant indoor grow was also confiscated. The pharmacy diversion unit has arrested 5 individuals involved in doctor shopping in Lake and surrounding counties this month for either Illegal Processing or Deception to Obtain. The drugs investigated include Fentanyl, Hydrcodone, Oxycodone, and Vicodin. They also have made three controlled/direct buys of Oxycodone and Suboxone.

LAWRENCE DRUG AND MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs are crack cocaine and marijuana. A significant problem exists with the trafficking of prescription drugs. The source of the pills is Florida pain clinics as well as pain



management clinics in neighboring Scioto County. The most common prescriptions available for street sale are Oxycontin, Percocet, Xanax, and Vicodin.

During the February Grand Jury, indictments were returned against six separate defendants. The indictments for felony drug crimes included charges from an indoor marijuana grow, prescription drug trafficking, and possessing crack cocaine.

The task force continued an investigation that targeted a group of individuals traveling to Florida and returning to sell narcotics within our county. The "sponsor" has been identified and covert purchases were completed from the sponsor as well as others selling prescription narcotics for him.

LORAIN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Heroin continues to be our largest problem drug with pharmaceutical drugs, cocaine, and crack cocaine close behind.

In February we arrested a male and female, both illegal immigrants, after a buy-bust of 18 oz. of crystal methamphetamine. A subsequent search of their residence turned up another ounce of the drug as well as a large caliber handgun which was later found to have been stolen in a home burglary. This is an ongoing investigation and we believe at least one additional arrest in another state is forthcoming. The crystal meth was manufactured in another country.

We conducted 6 separate undercover investigations involving the sale of heroin. Task Force officers assisted the Lorain Police Department in a sweep that involved 21 persons charged under secret indictments. Charges include Homicide and gang-related activity.

We investigated our 4th nurse of the year. She has admitted stealing injectible Demerol and Dilaudid from a local hospital for the past year. A resident of an area nursing home entered a guilty plea to "doctor shopping" charges. In addition to the 18 pain pills he was receiving daily at the nursing home, he was going to two local doctors and getting additional amounts of Oxycontin.

METRICH ENFORCEMENT UNIT

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

The Unit has recently dismantled two methamphetamine labs, one in Seneca County and one in Richland County (in a Holiday Inn hotel room) after seeing very little of the drug or of additional labs over that last several months.

There appears to be more usage of brown powder heroin with many of the tar heroin users cultivating connections with the powdered heroin dealers. Most of the tar is still coming from Columbus, while most of the powder is coming from Chicago and Toledo.

NORTHERN OHIO ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

During the month of February, 2010, the Northern Ohio Law

Enforcement Task Force which consists of local, state, and federal law enforcement, has initiated several investigations into traditional and gang related narcotic trafficking organizations. These multi-state trafficking organizations are operating in the Cleveland metropolitan area and are distributing cocaine, marijuana, and heroin.

NOLETF has infiltrated these organizations utilizing traditional investigative methods. These methods include but are not limited to the following: surveillance, informants, undercover agents, and Title III telephonic wire intercepts.

During February 2010, NOLETF began to prepare operational plans to execute arrest and search warrants resulting from a Title III investigation targeting a multi-national Mexican marijuana trafficking organization. This enforcement operation is planned for March 2010. Additionally, NOLETF recently dismantled a large indoor marijuana grow that was operating in the Cleveland, Ohio area. This investigation resulted in the seizure of 495 marijuana plants and the arrest of two defendants.

NOLETF is currently monitoring a Title III telephonic wire intercept that is targeting a heroin trafficking organization operating in the Cleveland, Ohio area. This investigation is ongoing.

OTTAWA COUNTY TASK FORCE

The predominant street drugs in Ottawa County this month have been Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Marijuana, Heroin, Fentanyl patches and prescription drugs.

The Task Force continues to see a rise in reports of prescription drug diversion and abuse. Opioid abuse is still on the rise along with reported diversion.

The Task Force continues to assist Ohio BCI & I and Toledo DEA with a Federal Drug Conspiracy investigation. As a result of two recent investigations utilizing a confidential informant, officers made two (2) U.S. Currency seizures of nearly \$300,000.00 from a Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO). Agents utilized tracking devices to follow suspects dropping off the U.S. Currency to their respective money couriers, ultimately apprehending the couriers in a traffic stop.

SOUTHEAST AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (SEALE)

Drugs readily available within the Seale Task Force jurisdiction include heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, PCP, Percocet, Oxycontin and marijuana. The task force continues to make controlled buys of various drugs on a daily basis resulting in search warrants and arrest warrants. During the month of February the force executed four search warrants and recovered cocaine, marijuana, and an assortment of pharmaceutical drugs.

The task force continues to see a rise in property related crimes in conjunction with addicts trying to support their habits. The task force continues to work in conjunction with several other task forces relating to drug trafficking in the greater Cleveland

area and its suburbs as well as working cases with drugs being shipped via mail.

STARK COUNTY METROPOLITAN NARCOTICS UNIT

Marijuana, crack cocaine, cocaine, heroin, and prescription drugs are prevalent in Stark County. Three Organized Criminal Drug Enforcement cases were opened this month pertaining to bulk marijuana and cocaine distribution in our jurisdiction.

An employee of a doctor's office was stealing prescription pads from her employer and writing scripts for her own use. The employee was indicted by the Stark County Grand Jury and arrested on fourth degree felony Illegal Processing of Drug Documents.

Agents traveled to Los Angeles, California to interview an inmate in the county jail pertaining to the shipment of approximately 200 pounds of bulk marijuana that was shipped to the Canton area. The suspect gave agents a full confession as to his marijuana distribution enterprise and is incarcerated pending federal prosecution.

A package was intercepted that lead to an investigation into online pharmacy purchases involving fraudulent money orders.

We assisted the Stark County Sheriff's Office in conducting a "murder for hire" investigation involving inmates of the Stark County Jail.

SUMMIT COUNTY DRUG UNIT

Illegal drugs prevalent in Summit County include cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine (Glass), MDMA (ecstasy), GHB, ketamine, Oxycontin, and other pharmaceuticals.

During February, interdiction efforts resulted in the seizure of 19 pounds of marijuana with a street value in excess of \$24,000.00. Investigations are underway targeting pharmaceutical and MDMA trafficking.

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. Percocet is the main prescription drug being seen and purchased by task force agents. The main source of the Percocet continues to be doctors in Florida.

On 02/08/2010 search warrants were served on North Poplar Street in Chillicothe. Over a pound of marijuana and an ounce of crack cocaine and cocaine were seized in the warrants.

On 02/11/2010 the task force investigated a methamphetamine lab fire in Adelphi, Ohio. The fire started when vapors ignited in the upstairs of the residence. Two persons were injured in the fire. Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Task Force assisted in the clean-up.

On 02/11/2010 a Confidential Informant set up a purchase of stolen property from Jesse Binegar in Highland County.

Binegar was taken into custody and charged with Burglary. He is a suspect for burglary offenses in three counties.

WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Marijuana, cocaine, prescription drugs, and heroin are prevalent in the Warren County Drug Task Force jurisdiction. Hash oil was recently purchased from a juvenile. Assuming it will be confirmed from the lab, hash oil is unusual for the area.

Also, large amounts of ecstasy have been purchased. The supplier appears to be getting it from the Detroit area, a common place for ecstasy supplies in SW Ohio.

WEST CENTRAL OHIO CRIME TASK FORCE

During the month of February, the West Central Ohio Crime Task Force continued to purchase cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and ecstasy. The West Central Ohio Crime Task Force executed two (2) search warrants during February seizing drugs and money. One (1) suspect was arrested as a result of search warrants.

WESTSHORE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (WEB)

Street drug cases involving ecstasy, marijuana and the trafficking of Oxycontin and Percocet were cases prosecuted during the month of February 2010.

In addition, the pharmaceutical diversion units efforts involved Oxycontin, Alprazolam and the on-going investigation of a large organized group obtaining Tussionex (cough suppressant) in large quantities with the suspects extending from Youngstown to Warren to Cleveland, Ohio. Trends remain the same with the exception of the Tussionex suspects who drive long distances to present the fraudulent scripts to area pharmacies.

Our first of two "Operation Medicine Cabinet" (prescription take-back) is set for May 8th, 2010. This date involves all of Cuyahoga, Lorain, and Medina Counties who have partnered to expand this service to our respective communities with hopes that this will eventually lead to a statewide effort.

A recent interview of an inmate revealed that the liquid Tussionex is not only "slammed" but is being used as a "dip" for "blunts" or other cigarette-form of drug ingestion much like the "wet" process.

YOUNGSTOWN TASK FORCE

There has been an increase of indoor marijuana grows discovered in the Youngstown area. Task Force investigators have uncovered 346 plants in three grows. This includes the Omega Rotary Garden featured in last month's report. Two other grows were found dismantled, apparently in response to the other raids. Other drugs of choice continue to be heroin, powder cocaine, crack, followed by prescription medication.



OTFCA Members Reporting in February 2010

Central Ohio Drug Enforcement (CODE) Task Force

Lieutenant Tom Brown

Clermont County Drug Task Force

Coordinator Bill Williams

Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit

Commander Eric Brown

Grand Lake Task Force

Lieutenant Steve Stienecker

Lake County Narcotics Agency

Director John A. Germ

Lawrence Drug and Major Crimes Task Force

Commander Timothy W. Sexton

Lorain County Drug Task Force

Captain Dennis E. Cavanaugh

METRICH Task Force

Lieutenant Dino Sgambellone

Northern Ohio Enforcement Task Force

Lieutenant Patrick Stephens

Ottawa County Task Force

Detective Doug St. Clair

Southeast Area Law Enforcement Task Force (SEALE)

Detective Brian Byard

South East Narcotics Team (SENT) Task Force

Commander Bernie Beltz

Stark County Metropolitan Narcotics Unit

Sergeant John Oliver

Summit County Drug Unit

Captain Hylton E. Baker

U.S. 23 Pipeline Major Crimes Task Force

Major Randy Bliss

Warren County Drug Task Force

Commander John Burke

West Central Ohio Crime Task Force

Sergeant Matt Treglia

Westshore Enforcement Bureau (WEB)

Special Agent in Charge Jeff Capretto

Youngstown Task Force

Lieutenant Lees