



COMMANDERS MONTHLY

A MONTHLY REPORT OF OHIO'S TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

July 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.

July Narratives: Drug Prevalence and Monthly Criminal Activity

CENTRAL OHIO DRUG ENFORCEMENT (CODE) TASK FORCE

The task force is still seeing a high influx of heroin coming from the Columbus area with local residents making daily runs.

CODE investigated two methamphetamine labs which resulted in three arrests. A search warrant was conducted in the city of Newark in which agents recovered 40 balloons of heroin and made three arrests.

CLERMONT COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Heroin continues to be the task force's first priority as a result of the higher than usual number of overdoses that have been reported. Pharmaceuticals, cocaine and marijuana are also available throughout the county.

In July, Clermont County Narcotics Agents executed a search warrant at an address in Williamsburg Twp. after receiving complaints that there was a large marijuana grow at the residence. Agents discovered an elaborate marijuana growing operation and also a system to make hashish. Recovered during the search were 103 marijuana plants, 31 pounds (14,066 grams) of marijuana, 110 grams of hash, \$1,000 in U.S. currency, eight firearms and drug paraphernalia.

DART NORTHEAST HAMILTON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The task force has been encountering the usual street drugs and made eight arrests in July for trafficking in these substances. There were no unusual trends in the way the transactions occurred or the investigative process. Several of the arrests involved multi-ounce dealers.

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

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

During the month of July, task force officers were extremely busy conducting numerous controlled buys of marijuana, crack cocaine, heroin and pharmaceutical substances. Officers dismantled one indoor marijuana cultivation operation and located over 100 plants from two outdoor cultivation operations.

FAIRFIELD/HOCKING MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

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

Detectives with the Major Crimes Unit concluded a two-month investigation with the execution of search warrants at two residences located in the same neighborhood outside of Laurelville. This investigation covered a tri-county area involving numerous individuals supplying pseudoephedrine to a suspect cooking and distributing methamphetamine back to the persons buying the precursors.

The Major Crimes Unit also worked a joint investigation with the Whitehall Police Department who had identified an upper-level source of cocaine in their area, which was also supplying an individual in Pickerington with one kilogram per week. A search warrant was issued for the location, where 20 pounds of marijuana and five ounces of cocaine were recovered. The suspect was arrested and charges are pending in the investigation.

GRAND LAKE TASK FORCE

Current illegal drugs in the jurisdiction include marijuana, heroin and cocaine. Drug activity has remained consistent.



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, ecstasy, OxyContin, pharmaceutical drugs, psilocybin mushrooms and LSD are encountered frequently during street-level undercover purchases of drugs.

On July 9, the task force conducted a reversal investigation in Beavercreek involving a transaction for the drug OxyContin. An undercover operative for the task force conducted a sale of a quantity of OxyContin placebos to a suspect in a business parking lot in Greene County. More than \$35,000 in U.S. currency was seized from the suspect during the investigation. One suspect was arrested for conspiracy to trafficking in drugs and possession of criminal tools.

On July 13, ACE and Beavercreek Police Department conducted a search warrant service at 2530 Ryan Court in Beavercreek. The search warrant was conducted after numerous purchases of psilocybin mushrooms and marijuana had been made from the suspects residing at the residence. One suspect was arrested for engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity for trafficking in drugs (psilocybin mushrooms), possession of psilocybin mushrooms and possession of criminal tools. Evidence obtained from the search warrant at 2530 Ryan Court included, but was not limited to: a quantity of psilocybin mushrooms; documentary evidence; U.S. currency; and criminal tools.

On July 15, the task force assisted the Greene County Sheriff's Office during a theft investigation at South Western Landmark, 1960 Roxanna-New Burlington Rd. in Spring Valley. One suspect was arrested for theft of anhydrous ammonia. A total of five tanks were attempted to be filled by the suspects. The suspects had filled one tank with anhydrous and were in the process of filling a second tank when interrupted by law enforcement. One suspect was arrested for illegal assembly of chemicals for manufacturing methamphetamine. Hazardous waste personnel removed all chemicals and equipment found to be contaminated and unsafe. Proper notification was made to the State of Ohio Bureau of Identification and Investigation (BCI&I) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) who dispatched proper hazardous waste personnel to take custody of the contaminated materials.

On July 16, ACE and the Clark County Sheriff's Office conducted a joint investigation regarding marijuana drug traffickers selling their product in Greene and Clark Counties. Undercover purchases of marijuana were made prior to two search warrants being served at 120 Rockway Ave., in Springfield, and 3406 Michael Lane in New Carlisle. Evidence seized during service of the search warrants included, but was not limited to: more than 15 pounds of marijuana; numerous handguns and rifles; approximately \$4,000 in U.S. currency; documentary evidence; two vehicles; and criminal tools.

On July 17, the task force, Central Kentucky Drug Task Force and the Beavercreek Police Department conducted a buy/arrest investigation in Beavercreek. The suspect delivered

approximately three pounds of psilocybin mushrooms to an undercover operative from the task force. Following the transaction, the Central Kentucky Drug Task Force conducted a subsequent investigation at the primary suspect's residence in Berea, Kentucky. Evidence obtained from the service of the search warrant included, but was not limited to: quantities of psilocybin mushrooms, marijuana and ecstasy; and documentary evidence. The suspect is scheduled to be indicted in Greene County and the violations occurring in Kentucky.

LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

The predominate street drugs in Lake County have been cocaine, crack cocaine, MDMA, heroin and marijuana.

This month, Lake County Narcotics has: made over 30 controlled buys; charged 12 individuals with either complicity, permitting drug abuse, or other drug-related charges; and conducted five search warrants and several buy/busts.

The Pharmacy Diversion Unit has made charges against nine individuals this month for illegal processing and deception to obtain. The predominate drugs was Vicodin, Adderal, OxyContin, methadone and Percocet.

LAWRENCE DRUG AND MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE

Drugs most prevalent are prescription drugs, crack cocaine and marijuana.

The tri-state region (Huntington, WV, Ashland, KY, and Lawrence County, OH) has experienced an increase in heroin with the central distribution at Huntington. The task force continues to receive numerous complaints and conduct investigations on individuals who continue to travel, often several in one vehicle, to Florida pain clinics obtaining prescriptions for OxyContin and Xanax.

During July, the task force conducted or assisted with investigations with the following agencies: local task force participating agencies; Huntington DEA Task Force; Huntington Police Violent Crimes Task Force; and Ohio Attorney General's Office Special Prosecutions Section.

New case investigations this month also began targeting prescription drugs and crack cocaine; the task force concluded a case involving a pharmacist charged with felony drug possession and felony drug theft.

During its most recent Grand Jury, several felony drug charges were presented for indictment. The cases involved drug crimes for trafficking in crack cocaine, marijuana and prescription drugs.

LORAIN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Heroin continues to be the biggest problem. The task force is finding users of all ages, races and income levels. Pharmaceutical drugs and cocaine continue to be problems as well.

The task force is in the process of serving a total of nine secret indictments for persons involved in trafficking heroin and

pharmaceutical drugs. In July, the task force arrested 11 other people for street sales of heroin.

The task force also expects to indict an office worker at a doctor's office who was making her own prescriptions and was also involved in two investigations of nurses suspected of stealing pain drugs from nursing homes. One of the nurses is suspected of "doctor shopping" as well.

The task force indicted a woman for stealing blank prescription forms from a dentist's office and also expects to indict a pharmacy technician for the theft of 300 tablets of pain management drugs from a retail pharmacy.

Finally, the task force is continuing boat patrols of Lake Erie with the local Coast Guard station as part of the Northern Border Initiative.

MEDWAY DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

The MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency continues to have a very busy year. For the month of July, the task force has seen a substantial increase in crack cocaine purchases followed by marijuana and cocaine.

MEDWAY continues to see an increase in the opportunity to purchase prescription drugs, including methadone, oxycodone, Vicodin and Percocet. If it continues at the current pace this year, MEDWAY will surpass what it was able to accomplish in 2008.

The Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit continues to be very effective in and out of its jurisdictions. Since March 2009, the agency has been working with multiple counties on a couple of individuals that have been using deception in obtaining drugs. On July 10, the investigator received a call from a local pharmacist who stated that he may have received a call from a potential suspect. Surveillance was set up and within an hour the suspect was stopped and subsequently arrested. As a result of the arrest, the Unit was able to assist eight counties in clearing up at least 60 possible counts of both deception to obtain a dangerous drug and illegal processing of drug documents. The Unit currently has 35 cases open and approximately 172 leads that need to be evaluated.

MEDINA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

During the month of July, Medina County Drug Task Force has not seen 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, and Percocet). Marijuana still is the most prevalent illicit drug with an increase of indoor marijuana grow operation investigations and seizures.

METRICH ENFORCEMENT UNIT

The METRICH Enforcement Unit continues to see cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, marijuana and diverted pharmaceuticals.

Through the first two quarters of 2009, the task force has increased new cases by 46%, new pharmaceutical cases by 238.7%, demand reduction by 26.5%, weapons seizures by

27.6%, intelligence submissions by 10.8%, and significant gains in the removal of various pharmaceutical drugs including Dilaudid, Hydrocodone, methadone and oxycodone. Seizures of cocaine and crack cocaine are down as a result of the task force's continued efforts to interrupt the flow of heroin and pharmaceutical drugs into its communities.

MULTI-AREA NARCOTICS (MAN) UNIT

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction include marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs, including OxyContin, oxymorphone, Vicodin and morphine.

This month, MAN Unit officers arrested nine individuals, initiated 33 cases and executed six searches.

Officers have also been working with confidential informants in making 21 controlled buys this month.

NORTHERN OHIO LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction include cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, MDMA and pharmaceutical abuse drugs. There has been an increase in availability of heroin and the number of indoor grow houses discovered in urban settings.

During the month of July, the task force, which consists of federal, state and local law enforcement, has initiated several investigations into traditional and gang-related narcotic trafficking organizations. These multi-state trafficking organizations are operating in the Cleveland area and are distributing cocaine, heroin and marijuana. The task force has infiltrated these organizations utilizing informants, undercover agents, and Title III telephonic wire intercepts. As a result, during the month of July, the task force arrested 12 defendants and seized approximately 300 grams of cocaine. These defendants are awaiting their initial judicial appearances, relative to federal narcotic violations. Additional arrests and search warrants are also expected.

In addition, six defendants have been convicted in the case involving 3,000 pounds of marijuana seized on February 15, 2009.

OTTAWA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The predominate street drugs in Ottawa County this month have been cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin and prescription drugs. The task force continues to see a rise in cases of heroin and pain medication overdoses.

During the month of July, agents assisted Ohio BCI&I and Toledo DEA agents with numerous controlled buys involving the total purchase of approximately 10 ounces of cocaine. The task force assisted the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office in several general case investigations and continues to receive additional complaints from area doctors and pharmacists referencing suspected doctor shoppers, therefore prompting additional casework.

The task force opened a new investigation on a former Norwalk resident that now lives in Marblehead and is trafficking heroin. This person has been identified and his source of supply has been identified as subject from Columbus.

SOUTHEAST AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (SEALE)

SEALE continues to see heroin as the major drug of choice in the jurisdiction. The task force continues to make controlled buys of heroin, powder cocaine and crack cocaine throughout the area and assist in the prosecution of the dealers.

The SEALE Narcotics Task Force wrapped up a joint investigation between SEALE and the DEA (Cleveland). SEALE, DEA and Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team executed a search warrant at the Fresh Entertainment Complex in Cleveland. Subsequently, the club manager was arrested, and several ounces of powder cocaine and more than \$14,000 in cash (including marked police-buy money) were found. Several vehicles were impounded as well.

SEALE assisted the Bedford and Garfield Heights Police Departments with the apprehension of the suspects in several home invasion robberies. Several individuals posing as police officers attempting to execute search warrants would bind/gag their victims and then rob them. After the suspects fled from Bedford to Garfield Heights after committing a home invasion robbery, the suspects were apprehended in Garfield Heights and are awaiting prosecution.

The unit also reopened the investigation of a major cocaine supplier in the area that has already been arrested on drug trafficking charges and is awaiting trial.

SOUTHEASTERN NARCOTICS TEAM (SENT) TASK FORCE

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction include street/crack cocaine and cocaine hcl. Pharmaceutical drugs include OxyContin, Xanax and Percocet.

Eleven new case files were opened during the month as well as continuing work on active cases. These new files include a case coordinated with the Pennsylvania State Police involving the trafficking of crack cocaine into the jurisdiction; Pennsylvania authorities shared an interest in this same individual. The task force also opened a new case file on another meth lab in the area.

SENT also continues active investigations coordinated with the local H.U.D. office with regard to 2,925 violations being committed on their local properties/apartment complexes.

STARK COUNTY METROPOLITAN NARCOTICS UNIT

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

The Unit assisted ATF in the execution of a federal search warrant stemming from homicide and drug activity in Michigan; heroin and crack cocaine were seized.

A parole search with a previously convicted marijuana grow suspect lead to the seizure of marijuana and charges pending. Also, a pharmaceutical investigation lead to the seizure of a marijuana grow operation.

The task force assisted the Canton Police Department in "Operation Crack Down" in which several interdiction traffic stops, several knock and talks along with consent searches were conducted; two indoor marijuana grows were seized. Also, a controlled buy and takedown of an individual in a high drug trafficking area lead to the seizure of crack cocaine and one arrest.

The task force also has several open cases at this time.

SUMMIT COUNTY DRUG UNIT

Drugs prevalent in the area include cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine (glass), MDMA (ecstasy), GHB, Ketamine, OxyContin and other pharmaceuticals.

During July, interdiction efforts resulted in the seizure of 13 parcels containing marijuana with a combined weight of 116.25 pounds and 1.794 kilograms of cocaine. This represents a street value in excess of \$330,565.

Also, a successful controlled delivery of more than one kilogram of cocaine resulted in the arrest of two suspects, one with a long history of criminal activities.

Information from Summit County patrol officers resulted in the discovery of a marijuana grow outside of a Coventry Twp. residence. One suspect was charged with cultivation, trafficking and child endangering.

TRUMBULL-ASHTABULA GROUP (TAG)

Current illegal drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction include marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and prescription drugs.

TAG has seen small changes in the drug trends from last month. Drug tips remain on the increase as local law enforcement has either laid off or reassigned narcotics investigators to street duty. That has also caused the increased drug tips on smaller street dealers. Recently, investigators seized Suboxone during a drug investigation that the task force has not seen in the past. More and more doctors are resorting to pill counts as patients abuse these drugs. TAG contacts doctors' offices as standard practice following the arrest of an individual for selling his prescription medicine.

TAG was involved in multiple investigations during the month of July involving the purchases of marijuana, cocaine and prescription drugs. It has also dedicated more time to conducting surveillance and undercover operations at local pharmacies, whose parking lots have become a haven for drug dealers.

On July 11, TAG investigators arrested Michael Kuntz in his upstairs apartment located at 1648 North Park Ave. in Warren following a three-month investigation into drug trafficking. At

the time, Kuntz was being held in the Trumbull County Justice Center without bond until his arraignment. While investigators are still determining specific charges, Kuntz is facing multiple charges for trafficking and possession of cocaine and marijuana, receiving stolen property, drug paraphernalia, weapons under disability and other firearms offenses; some drug possession and trafficking offenses are F1 crimes. Kuntz, age 31, has a prior criminal history involving offenses of violence, firearms and escape. The investigation, search and arrest required the assistance of the Ohio State Highway Patrol and its Special Response Team, the Cleveland Police Narcotics Unit, Trumbull County Sheriff's Office Investigative Division and the Lordstown Police Department. Task force investigators and assisting officers from the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office and the Lordstown Police Department searched the residence and recovered the following items: more than two pounds of cocaine; several pounds of marijuana; surveillance camera; drug paraphernalia; cell phones; digital scale; more than \$3,000 in U.S. currency; prescription drugs; ammunition; gun cleaning kit; night vision; laptop computer; three loaded firearms including a Mac-9 sub-machine gun; vacuum sealer; and other miscellaneous items. Additional items recovered from the scene include a large collection of Barbie dolls and power tools that were identified as stolen property.

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.

Agents served two search warrants in July in the city of Chillicothe on drug dealers from Columbus. Agents seized crack cocaine, OxyContin, and a handgun. Agents continue to purchase crack cocaine, OxyContin and heroin on a regular basis throughout the task force area.

WEST CENTRAL OHIO CRIME TASK FORCE

During the month of July, the West Central Ohio Crime Task Force purchased heroin, ecstasy, cocaine, crack cocaine and marijuana. The task force executed three search warrants seizing money, drugs and firearms. The task force also seized two outdoor marijuana grow operations and has seen an increase in heroin use and sales.

Additionally, the task force dismantled a meth lab and arrested two individuals as a result. The task force also worked a prostitution operation in Beaverdam where a 14-year-old female was involved and found to be a runaway prostitute. This prosecution operation was conducted in conjunction with the federal task force out of Toledo.

WESTSHORE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (WEB)

The street drug unit prosecuted cases involving marijuana, crack and powder cocaine along with multiple cases of heroin. WEB is seeing a substantial increase in heroin use and sales.

The task force was also involved in one prostitution bust where a local 67-year-old female was providing additional services to a standard massage in the form of sexual contact to her male clients.

The pharmaceutical diversion efforts activity continues to increase. Cases involving OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, Xanax and what may turn into a widespread issue of a group seeking Tussionex liquid are currently being investigated.



The **Ohio Drug Law Enforcement Fund RFP** will be released September 1 and will be due to OCJS September 30. The Ohio Drug Law Enforcement Fund will provide funding to defray expenses that a drug task force organization incurs in performing its functions related to the enforcement of the state's drug laws and other state laws related to illegal drug activity. Each applicant will need to demonstrate how their application meets the stated purpose of the fund. Please visit <http://www.ocjs.ohio.gov> in the near future for more information.

OTFCA Members Reporting in July 2009

Central Ohio Drug Enforcement (CODE) Task Force

Lieutenant Tom Brown

Clermont County Drug Task Force

Coordinator Bill Williams

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

Lake County Narcotics Agency

Director John A. Germ

Lawrence Drug and Major Crime Task Force

Commander Timothy W. Sexton

Lorain County Drug Task Force

Captain Dennis E. Cavanaugh

MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency

Director David Smith

Medina County Drug Task Force

Agent in Charge Michael Barnhardt

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