



# COMMANDERS MONTHLY

A MONTHLY REPORT OF OHIO'S TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

November 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.

## November Narratives: Drug Prevalence and Monthly Criminal Activity

### **CENTRAL OHIO DRUG ENFORCEMENT (CODE) TASK FORCE**

The Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force dominant narcotics have been crack cocaine, prescription drugs and heroin.

The task force ended an investigation in which two individuals were charged with trafficking in cocaine after a search warrant was conducted. During the month of November, task force agents recovered one handgun and 97 doses of various prescription drugs.

CODE would also like to announce that the Perry County Sheriff's Office has joined the task force and has already been busy making new cases.

### **COLUMBIANA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE**

Heroin, crack, cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine are prevalent in the Columbiana County Drug Task Force area.

The drug task force is continuing to build cases on local drug traffickers in the county. They have seen a noticeable drop in the sale of methamphetamine and clandestine labs in the past two months. Task force agents believe this is due to the arrest of two local meth cooks who had been teaching the one pot method to other local meth users.

Local sources have indicated that there is a rise in the availability of LSD in Columbiana County. It is unclear if this is true LSD or an imitation at this time.

The Task force intercepted 13 pounds of marijuana being shipped via U.S. mail to an address in Leetonia. The package was shipped from California and used a contact number out of Arizona. The destination was an abandoned house.

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

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

The Delaware County LEAP Drug Task Force focused on heroin and pharmaceutical investigations during the month of November. Numerous controlled buys of heroin and two search warrants resulted in the seizure of approximately 40 grams of heroin and 120 unit doses of Oxycontin.

### **FAIRFIELD/HOCKING MAJOR CRIMES UNIT**

The drugs most prevalent within the Fairfield Hocking Jurisdiction are heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine.

Detectives with the Major Crimes Unit continue to make street-level heroin and crack cocaine purchases in the surrounding communities of Fairfield and Hocking Counties.

The Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit conducted a joint investigation with the Hocking County Sheriff's Office in a burglary ring that also involved narcotics trafficking. Along with drug purchases, detectives were able to purchase stolen items, including guns, from residential burglaries in Hocking and surrounding counties.

The total indoor marijuana grows for the year is at eight, with one additional being discovered in November in Hocking County.

### **GRAND LAKE TASK FORCE**

The Grand Lake Task Force is continuing to see prescription drugs being diverted. They are still seeing heroin, cocaine and marijuana.



**OHIO DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
EDUCATION • SERVICE • PROTECTION

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

On November 10, 2009 the Greene County Agencies for Combined Enforcement (ACE Task Force), Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, Dayton Police Department, Cincinnati Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service and the Cincinnati DEA Office conducted a joint effort in serving 13 search warrants in Greene and Montgomery County. The search warrants were conducted in a cooperative effort addressing major drug traffickers conducting their business in the greater Greene/Montgomery/Hamilton County area. The drug organization being investigated was linked to several source cities which included but were not limited to Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

The search warrant services were conducted after one of the principle drug traffickers arrived to sell two kilograms of cocaine to an undercover operative in Greene County. His arrest initiated the service of the search warrants. Evidence collectively seized from the service of the warrants included but was not limited to, several handguns and long guns, over \$200,000.00, over six kilograms of cocaine, approximately twenty pounds of marijuana, several vehicles, and documentary evidence linking the co-conspirators together.

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.

## **LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY**

The predominate street drugs in Lake County have been crack cocaine, heroin and marijuana. Lake County Narcotics has made ten controlled buys; nine additional individuals have been charged with either complicity, permitting drug abuse or other related drug charges. Agents conducted three search warrants, one consent search and one interdiction stop. The interdiction stop resulted in a consent search where 55 pounds of marijuana and over \$18,000.00 were seized. This was a joint investigation between LCNA and DEA. Future arrests of this magnitude are expected during the month of December. An individual who was involved in selling heroin in September was arrested for possession of ten pounds of marijuana. He was an illegal immigrant and LCNA had previously been buying heroin from him. Heroin abuse is becoming more plentiful. More informants are being able to make controlled buys regarding heroin trafficking.

The pharmacy diversion unit has been working on arresting six individuals involved in doctor shopping in Lake and surrounding counties. The majority of pills diverted were oxycodone and Oxycontin.

## **LORAIN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE**

The Lorain County Drug Task Force continues to see heroin as the number one problem in the area. This is followed closely by pharmaceutical drugs and crack and powder cocaine.

The task force made four individual arrests on heroin charges

and those arrests resulted in the recovery of four and a half bundles of heroin.

Task force agents executed two search warrants at separate locations for indoor marijuana grows. They also made several undercover purchases of Oxycontin and Percocet at a drive thru convenience store. Subsequently, a search warrant was executed at the business. A considerable number of Vicodin, Percocet and Oxycontin tablets were seized as well as numerous other pharmaceuticals and a .380 caliber handgun. The owner of the business was arrested.

Lorain County Drug Task Force indicted a suspected doctor shopper who was recently sent to prison on non-drug charges. They assisted in the investigation of a pharmacy robbery where prescription drugs were stolen. A female suspect was arrested within hours and most of the stolen drugs were recovered.

Task force agents are also involved in the investigation of a pharmacist suspected of stealing pain medications and anti-anxiety medications from a pharmacy.

The task force is involved in a joint investigation with WEB involving a woman with an extensive criminal record who is suspected of passing bogus scripts in the area.

Marine operations have concluded for the year with the Northern Border Initiative.

## **METRICH ENFORCEMENT UNIT**

The METRICH Enforcement Unit primarily sees cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, diverted pharmaceuticals, ecstasy and marijuana. Levamisole has appeared in several of the most recent crack buys.

On Tuesday, November 3, 2009, the Seneca County Drug Task Force-METRICH Enforcement Unit, consisting of the Fostoria Police Department, Tiffin Police Department, Seneca County Sheriff's Office, the Seneca County Prosecutor's Office, along with additional officers from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation/Identification, DEA Task Force (Toledo Division), Hancock County Drug Task Force - METRICH, Hancock County Sheriff's Office, Findlay Police Department, United States Border Patrol, Republic Police Department, Bloomdale Police Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Seneca County Dog Warden & the Lake Township Police Department, executed six drug related search warrants in the city of Fostoria after a three to four month drug operation tagged operation "De-railed".

The search warrants, signed by Judge Jay Meyer of the Seneca County Common Pleas Probate Court and Judge David Woessner of the Wood County Common Pleas Probate Court, resulted in the confiscation of crack cocaine, marijuana, US currency, drug paraphernalia and criminal tools from six residences throughout Fostoria. Additional charges of trafficking crack cocaine on multiple defendants are pending completion of the investigation.

## **MULTI-AREA NARCOTICS (MAN) TASK FORCE**

Marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, ecstasy

and prescription drugs including Oxycontin, oxymorphone, Vicodin, morphine and Klonopin.

Marijuana remains consistent and the cost is high. Crack cocaine is more prevalent than powder cocaine. Oxycontin is very popular and the task force is seeing an increase in ecstasy.

Twelve individuals were arrested in November. MAN Unit officers initiated 30 new cases this month, seven searches were executed and two meth labs were uncovered. One meth lab involved items (precursors) hidden in the rafters of a county park pavilion.

#### **NORTHERN OHIO LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (NOLETF)**

Cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, MDMA and pharmaceutical abuse drugs are prevalent in the Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force jurisdiction.

There has been an increase in homicides city-wide. The slowdown in highway interdiction seizures is possibly due to higher than normal rainfall in Mexico.

During the month of November, the Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force which consists of local, state, and federal law enforcement, initiated several investigations into traditional and gang-related narcotics 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, informants, undercover agents, and Title III telephonic wire intercepts. During November, NOLETF continued to monitor an active Title III telephonic wire intercept, relative an ongoing investigation targeting a multi-national Mexican marijuana trafficking organization. Additionally NOLETF arrested six defendants who were involved with domestic marijuana trafficking organizations. As a result, 353 pounds of marijuana and \$120,110.00 were seized.

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

The predominate street drugs in Ottawa County for the month of November were cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin and prescription drugs.

The task force conducted numerous new controlled buy cases with agents purchasing several ounces of cocaine in Sandusky and Ottawa Counties. 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.

Task force agents assisted Ohio BCI & I agents and Toledo DEA with the seizure of one kilogram of cocaine from a traffic stop on the Ohio Turnpike in Ottawa County. One person was incarcerated and later indicted on two Felony Drug Abuse offenses. Task force agents also seized one vehicle that was used to facilitate the drug offense and is pending criminal forfeiture.

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

Drugs currently prevalent within the SENT jurisdiction include cocaine hcl, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and pharmaceuticals, including Xanax, morphine, hydrocodone and temezepan.

The task force coordinated with OBP on a case in which a pharmacy tech diverted 1200 schedule III and IV controls and was illegally processing scripts. Stolen firearms were recovered as a result of a robbery case arising out of a drug deal gone bad. SENT opened 11 new case files and executed high risk search warrants involving SWAT and canine units relative to crack houses.

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

Prevalent drugs in the Stark County jurisdiction include marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs.

Responding to a tip of a wanted felon, Stark County agents met a Greyhound bus and arrested one individual on three warrants.

An interdiction stop resulted in the arrest of one individual and the seizure of crack cocaine. A parcel interdiction resulted in the seizure of six pounds of marijuana. Another parcel interdiction resulted in the seizure of marijuana that was concealed within a hollowed out candle.

Precursors for manufacturing meth were found at a local hotel. The investigation continues.

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

Cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine (Glass), MDMA (ecstasy), GHB, ketamine, Oxycontin and other pharmaceuticals are prevalent in the Summit County jurisdiction.

During November, interdiction efforts resulted in the seizure of eighteen parcels containing marijuana with a combined weight of 205.50 pounds and a street value in excess of \$267,100.

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

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

Agents have begun an investigation into pain clinics and doctors in the task force area.

Agents continue to purchase prescription drugs and heroin. A Grand Jury in Pickaway County returned indictments on 16 people in November as a result of purchases.

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

During the month of November, the West Central Ohio Crime Task Force continued to purchase crack, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, Oxycontin and marijuana. The task force continues to purchase heroin in Paulding County and marijuana in Van Wert County. The task force executed three search warrants seizing cash, guns, narcotics and paraphernalia. As a result of these

search warrants, one suspect was arrested and charged with Trafficking.

Investigators attended specialized training during November.

#### **WESTSHORE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (WEB)**

In November, the street drug unit was involved in the prosecution of cases involving heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana and anabolic steroids.

The pharmaceutical diversion portion of the unit prosecuted cases involving alproazolam, clonazepam, oxycodone and Vicodin.



## **OTFCA Members Reporting in November 2009**

#### *Central Ohio Drug Enforcement (CODE) Task Force*

Lieutenant Tom Brown

#### *Columbiana County Drug Task Force*

Detective Dan Downard

#### *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 Combined for Enforcement (ACE) Task Force*

Commander Bruce May

#### *Lake County Narcotics Agency*

Director John A. Germ

#### *Lorain County Drug Task Force*

Captain Dennis E. Cavanaugh

#### *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

#### *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

#### *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