



COMMANDERS



MONTHLY

A MONTHLY REPORT OF OHIO'S TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

NOVEMBER 2008

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

CODE concluded an ongoing cocaine investigation. After several cocaine buys, two search warrants were conducted - one in Licking County and one in Franklin County. Two other homes were searched in the investigation; one home is in Delaware County. Four people were arrested and charged with trafficking and/or possession of cocaine. Approximately one-half kilo of cocaine, \$52,000 in cash and a vehicle were recovered.

CLERMONT COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs continue to be cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana and opiate-related drugs, including black tar heroin.

During the month of November, 2008, the unit continued to follow up on Operation Opiate Blocker, resulting in an additional six subjects being indicted for opiate offenses.

One note of interest deals with the value of sharing information with road patrol units. The task force had been investigating a subject who was alleged to be dealing in marijuana. After exhausting leads, it is routine to share the list of suspects with the respective police agencies where the suspect resides. In this instance, the officer acting upon information provided by the task force pursued a traffic stop further than simply issuing a citation. As a result of this officer's efforts, he recovered one pound of marijuana packaged for resale. The officer then shared this information with task force agents who were able to obtain a search warrant for the suspect's residence. During the searching of the residence, agents recovered an additional four pounds of marijuana, several handguns and \$20,000 in currency.

COLUMBIANA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs in the jurisdiction are heroin, crack, cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine.



The task force indicted 11 subjects on a variety of felony drug charges in November, 2008. One

of the subjects, who was selling marijuana, had a small (18 plants), but well-maintained, hydroponics grow at his residence. The subject now states that he was paid by a larger marijuana supplier to maintain the hydroponics grow at his residence. The task force continues to work with the DEA on several federal investigations involving subjects from central Ohio, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

DART NORTHEAST HAMILTON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The task force is still encountering the usual street drugs and making arrests on neighborhood complaints. There was a package interdiction of 60 80-milligram tablets of OxyContin, which led to two arrests. This subject, like the others, was having these packages shipped to different locations for pick-up.

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

LEAP continues to see an increase in the availability of heroin and pharmaceuticals drugs; cocaine, crack cocaine and marijuana continue to be chronic problems in Delaware County.

The task force has been extremely productive in conducting controlled purchases utilizing confidential informants as well as conducting several undercover operations during the month of November. Four undercover officers have been utilized to purchase pharmaceuticals, marijuana and cocaine.

FAIRFIELD/HOCKING MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

The drugs most prevalent within the area are heroin, crack cocaine and marijuana.

The Major Crimes Unit served two search warrants on suspected indoor marijuana grow operations. In Pickerington, Ohio, a downstairs bedroom had been converted into a grow room; approximately three pounds of processed marijuana were removed from the residence. The second search warrant was in Baltimore, Ohio, where a walk-in closet was the location of the grow. The individual at this residence was ordering marijuana



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
EDUCATION • SERVICE • PROTECTION

seeds through the Internet from Amsterdam, Netherlands. Approximately five pounds of processed marijuana was seized. Also, very detailed records of the grow operations and overseas contacts were taken as evidence.

Methamphetamine continues to be purchased on a street level by detectives. An arrest and search warrant are pending on a female suspect in hopes of leading to a meth lab in the area.

GRAND LAKE TASK FORCE

Grand Lake Task Force noticed in November, 2008, that prescription drug use and sales were again high; we continued purchasing OxyContin, Xanax, Vicodin, Percocet and Morphine. The task force has seen an increase in the amount of heroin purchased as well as an increase in usage. The powder cocaine purchases have dropped; however, there is still a large amount of marijuana in the area.

GREENE COUNTY AGENCIES FOR COMBINED ENFORCEMENT (ACE) TASK FORCE

The Greene County Agencies for Combined Enforcement (ACE) Task Force culminated a three-month investigation addressing a marijuana drug trafficker primarily operating in Greene and Montgomery counties on November 7, 2008. After several undercover purchases of drugs from the suspect, a search warrant was served at his residence in Beaver Creek, Ohio, on November 7, 2008. Evidence found during the search included, but was not limited to, more than \$104,000 in U. S. Currency and a large quantity of marijuana. Information gained during the investigation revealed the suspect was obtaining the marijuana through a contact in Detroit, Michigan.

On November 18, 2008, the task force purchased over one pound of heroin from a suspect for \$40,000 that led to multiple search warrants served in Greene and Montgomery Counties. Four subjects were arrested for trafficking in heroin and other drug-related charges. Two of the suspects were citizens of Mexico and two of the suspects were from Jordan. The drug enterprise being addressed has been responsible for bringing major shipments of heroin and cocaine to several counties in Ohio and other states for the past few years. The task force is cooperating with DEA, ATF and the FBI regarding the drug enterprise.

The primary drugs of choice in Greene County are crack cocaine and marijuana, followed closely by heroin and OxyContin. Methamphetamine, pharmaceuticals, psilocybin mushrooms and LSD are encountered regularly during street-level undercover buys. So far in 2008, the task force has conducted four decontaminations of clandestine methamphetamine labs, which matches the total number labs decontaminated in 2007.

LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

The predominate street drugs in Lake County this month have been crack cocaine, cocaine, MDMA and marijuana. Lake County Narcotics has made numerous controlled buys and buys/busts in November. The pharmacy diversion unit has made charges against five individuals this month for deception to obtain and illegal processing; predominate drugs were OxyContin and Percocet.

LAWRENCE DRUG AND MAJOR CRIME TASK FORCE

Illegal drugs prevalent in the area are oxycodone, hydrocodone, alprazolam, cocaine and marijuana.

In November, 2008, the task force executed 15 arrest warrants and three search warrants. The search warrants revealed nearly 600 oxycodone tablets. Most of the defendants were traveling to pain clinics in Florida and obtaining the oxycodone. The defendants were being treated by two or three doctors ("doctor shopping") and were aware Florida does not currently have a prescription reporting database.

The abuse of oxycodone is by far the biggest problem currently in Lawrence County. The task force receives ten to 15 calls a week from family members or others with information pertaining to someone who is selling oxycodone. Every call is similar - the suspected drug dealer is traveling to Florida and bringing back oxycodone to sell.

LORAIN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Heroin continues to be the task force's biggest problem, followed by cocaine, crack cocaine, pharmaceutical drugs and marijuana.

The task force is currently involved in a joint investigation with W.E.B. concerning a prescription ring operating in a number of northern Ohio counties.

The task force is also involved in an investigation of a local nurse suspected of stealing narcotics from a health care facility as well as "doctor shopping." This is the 15th investigation of a nurse in the last year. The task force also concluded a case involving a nurse who admitted to stealing Demerol from a local hospital for the past two years. The total number of thefts is believed to be over 1,000.

Finally, the task force concluded the boating season as part of the Northern Border Initiative. Members of the boat crew will be receiving additional trainings over the winter months.

MAHONING VALLEY LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

An 18-month investigation of marijuana trafficking involving Youngstown State University (YSU) students has identified a California-based supplier. The probe was initiated by YSU Police Sgt. Randall Williams, who is assigned to the task force.

The investigation revealed that marijuana and money were being sent via U.S. Postal Service and other common carriers between California and Youngstown. One parcel was interdicted by the Warren County Drug Task Force at the DHL facility and contributed to the evidence in the case.

At this time, the California supplier and three local people have been indicted on multiple charges; there could be other individuals charged as the investigation continues. Additionally, 20 members of the YSU football team will face administrative sanctions for drug abuse.

MEDINA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

During the month of November, 2008, the Medina County Drug Task Force arrested seven individuals for felony trafficking in drugs. Two of the arrests were the result of a search warrant conducted in the City of Brunswick, where approximately three pounds of marijuana, one-half ounce of cocaine, numerous smoking devices, more than \$2,000 in U.S. Currency, a 9mm semi-automatic handgun and a ballistic vest were seized. Prevalent drugs in Medina County include marijuana, cocaine hcl, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and pharmaceutical drugs to include OxyContin, Percocet and Vicodin.

MEDWAY DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Prevalent drugs this period have been cocaine, ecstasy and crack cocaine. MEDWAY has also seen an increase in the sale of pharmaceutical drugs. The pharmaceutical diversion agent has been extremely busy meeting with doctors and assisting them with pain management agreements and how to identify and prevent "doctor shopping."

The area has recently been targeted by pharmacy breaking and enterings (B&Es); one took place at the Kidron Town and Country on November 3, 2008, at which entry and exit were made through a window. Four hundred and forty-one oxycodone five-milligram capsules, 320 hydrocodone 10-milligram capsules and 650 APAP tablets were taken. The alarm system was activated at approximately 3:07 a.m.

On November 14, 2008, a B&E occurred at the Medicine Shoppe in Wooster; entry and exit were made through the north window. Hydrocodone, 5-milligram- 500 APAP, 155 tablets; Vicodin, 5-milligram- 500 milligram APAP, 136 tablets; hydrocodone, 10-milligram, 660 APAP, 220 tablets; hydrocodone, 7.5-milligram, 750 APAP, 162 tablets were taken. The alarm system was activated at approximately 2:40 a.m.

Another B&E occurred on November 20, 2008 at the Ritzman Pharmacy in Seville; entry and exit were made through a south window. Approximately 1400 Vicodin tablets, and Tramadol, 50 milligram, 749 tablets, propoxy-N/APAP 100/650, 500 tablets were taken. The alarm system was activated at 10:55 p.m.

On December 2, 2008, a B&E occurred at the Maurer Pharmacy in Wooster; entry and exit were made through a window. Taken were 2,500 bottles of Vicodin, one 250-capsule bottle of Vicodin and two bottles containing 100 Vicodone. The alarm system was activated at approximately 10:00 p.m.

There are no leads at this time on the B&Es. Through the course of investigating diversion, Vicodin, followed by Oxycontin, seem to still be the drug of choice.

METRICH ENFORCEMENT UNIT

The METRICH Enforcement Unit continues to see crack and powder cocaine, heroin, diverted pharmaceuticals, marijuana and to a lesser extent, ecstasy, LSD and methamphetamine. Additionally, an increase in parcel-related shipments of marijuana has been observed throughout the region coming from Arizona and California. Tar heroin continues to come out of Columbus while powdered heroin comes out of Detroit,

Chicago and Toledo. There has been a slight increase in methamphetamine labs throughout the region as well.

MULTI-AREA NARCOTICS (MAN) TASK FORCE

Illegal drugs prevalent in the area include marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs, mostly OxyContin.

Marijuana, cocaine and crack cocaine remain consistent. Officers continue to investigate prescription drug cases and are seeing a lot of methadone, Vicodin and OxyContin.

The MAN Unit again had a meth-related case with an 18-month-old child in the residence. Both parents were arrested on possession of methamphetamine charges. The child was placed with a relative through Women's Job and Family Services. Ten search warrants were executed this month. MAN Unit officers continue to work confidential informants making controlled purchases of marijuana, cocaine, crack and prescription medications.

NORTHERN OHIO LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs in the area include: cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, MDMA and pharmaceutical abuse drugs.

Street gangs and the violence associated with these gangs are still a very serious concern in northeast Ohio. Firearms confiscations by zone-car personnel and detectives remain high. Gang enforcement initiatives by the CPD, ATF, DEA, the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office and the GCRTA police continue.

During the month of November, 2008, the Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force, which consists of federal, state and local law enforcement, have initiated investigations into several traditional and gang-related narcotic trafficking organizations operating in the Cleveland, Ohio, area. The task force has infiltrated these organizations utilizing informants and undercover agents; investigations are pending.

During the month of November, 2008, Cleveland Police, along with the task force, initiated an investigation regarding multiple armed robberies of pharmacies and home invasions in the Cleveland, Ohio, area. After a lengthy surveillance operation, several search warrants were executed with the suspects responsible for these robberies being arrested and charged.

OTTAWA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The primary drugs of choice in Ottawa County are powder cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin and prescription drugs such as Vicodin, muscle relaxers and anti-anxiety medications.

The task force continues to receive information that heroin and Fentanyl abuse is on the rise. According to current sources, Fentanyl is more prevalent and easier to purchase than heroin. The sources indicate that the range of users varies in age from teenagers to adults. The task force has made no recent controlled buys or had any seizures involving either substance.

During November, 2008, the task force continued to make numerous controlled buys with Ohio BCI&I agents, Toledo DEA agents, Sandusky County Sheriff's Office and the Fremont Police Department in Ottawa and Sandusky Counties. As a result of the controlled buys, approximately 855 grams of cocaine were purchased. The task force continues to work closely with the aforementioned agencies on numerous multiple-ounce cocaine traffickers in Ottawa and Sandusky counties.

The task force continues to see an increase in pharmaceutical abuse and "doctor shopping."

SOUTHEAST AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (SEALE)

The SEALE Task Force has ended a six-month investigation into several individuals who were selling crack cocaine, powder cocaine, marijuana, OxyContin, Clonazepam and Percocet. The investigation targeted one particular apartment complex across from a school and resulted in 11 arrests and the seizure of approximately 50 grams of crack cocaine as well as prescription medications and marijuana. Twenty-five controlled buys were made during the case which ended on December 3, 2008, with the last three targets being arrested.

The task force continues to see an increase in OxyContin cases and the pills seem to be easily obtained on the street. In the month of November, 2008, controlled purchases were made of cocaine, crack cocaine, OxyContin, heroin and marijuana. The price of cocaine continues to rise with the shortage and the quality continues to decrease.

SOUTHEASTERN NARCOTICS TEAM (SENT) TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs in the area include street/cocaine hcl, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin and pharmaceuticals including Percocet, OxyContin, Xanax, Vicodin, methadone and Soma.

SENT continues to work with local agencies, patrol divisions and SWAT interdicting "crack houses" in local neighborhoods. Recent intelligence has revealed a local who is scoring very significant amounts of pharmaceuticals from four other individuals who are traveling to Franklin County doctors to obtain prescriptions.

SUMMIT COUNTY DRUG UNIT

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

Interdiction efforts resulted in the seizure of 60 pounds of marijuana at a postal processing station at the Cleveland airport.

A methamphetamine production suspect shot and killed his former girlfriend following a break-up. The suspect then turned the gun on himself and died two days later. Subsequent searches at his residence uncovered chemicals and apparatuses utilized in the production of methamphetamine. This subject was arrested in 2002 following an investigation by the Summit County Drug

Unit for trafficking cocaine through a gun and tackle shop in the Portage Lakes area of Summit County.

TRUMBULL-ASHTABULA GROUP (TAG)

Prevalent drugs in the area include marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin and prescription drugs.

While TAG has not seen any significant changes in drug trends, heroin continues to be a serious problem in Ashtabula County. Methamphetamine complaints and investigations are down.

TAG is actively involved in multiple drug investigations involving heroin and are working cases involving cocaine and marijuana.

U.S. 23 PIPELINE MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE

Drugs being seen by the task force are crack cocaine, heroin, cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and prescription drugs. A continuing increase in heroin and prescription drugs is being seen in the rural areas.

In November, 2008, a search warrant was served at a suspected heroin/crack cocaine house. Five subjects were arrested and charged. One person was charged with trafficking in heroin and drug abuse; another was charged with permitting drug abuse; one person was charged with obstructing official business and drug abuse; and two others were charged with drug abuse. Syringes (both loaded and unloaded), tar heroin, miscellaneous paraphernalia, miscellaneous pills, \$575 in cash, and a Taurus snub-nose .38 Revolver were removed during the execution of the search warrant.

WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Illegal drugs prevalent in the area include marijuana, cocaine and prescription drugs.

The task force completed a drug reversal of 15 pounds of marijuana, OxyContin and cash for \$30,000 worth of counterfeit money exchange. The subject was making \$20, \$50, and \$100 dollar bills through use of computer and a high-end scanner.

The task force also completed 600 OxyContin reversals and money seizures; the case is pending for federal court.

WEST CENTRAL OHIO CRIME TASK FORCE

During the month of November, the West Central Ohio Crime Task Force continued to purchase crack, powder cocaine and marijuana. The task force executed three search warrants seizing approximately 25 pounds of marijuana, one-half kilogram of powder cocaine, 50 firearms and more than \$180,000 in cash. As a result of these search warrants, three individuals were arrested with additional charges are being submitted to the Grand Jury. One of the search warrants involved subjects bringing large quantities of marijuana to the Allen County area from Mexico, New Mexico and Arizona. This subject also was bringing prescription medications to sell locally. The task force also conducted three drug presentations, one to a local civic organization and the other two to school children.

WESTSHORE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (WEB)

During November, 2008, the street drug unit prosecuted cases involving marijuana, crack and powder cocaine, heroin, a subject selling home computer generated scripts for Vicodin and a case involving local females for prostitution.

The pharmaceutical diversion unit prosecuted cases involving Percocet, Vicodin and Dilaudid.



OTFCA Members Reporting in November 2008

Central Ohio Drug Enforcement (CODE) Task Force

Lieutenant Tom Brown

Clermont County Drug Unit

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

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

Mahoning Valley Law Enforcement Task Force

Lieutenant Robin Lees

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) Task Force

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)

Chief Brian Byard

Southeastern Narcotics Team Task Force (SENT)

Commander Bernie Beltz

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

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