



COMMANDERS MONTHLY

A MONTHLY REPORT OF OHIO'S TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

October 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.

Please join the Office of Criminal Justice Services in welcoming one of our newest staff members. Shawn Rowley joined our team on November 9 as a Law Enforcement Liaison. He has spent 15 years in law enforcement; twelve of those years were served as a Deputy in the Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Office. While in Tuscarawas County, he served as a Road Sergeant and a Detective Sergeant in Charge of Narcotics. Shawn also served from 1991-1994 as a Calvary Scout in the U.S. Army. Look for Shawn at future OTFCA meetings. He may also stop by your drug task force for a visit.

October Narratives: Drug Prevalence and Monthly Criminal Activity

CLERMONT COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The unit continues to see a substantial amount of heroin. Pharmaceuticals, cocaine and marijuana are available throughout the county as well.

On October 29, 2009 members of the Clermont County Drug Task Force, in conjunction with officers from Union Township Police Department and the Clermont County Sheriff's Office, served 55 suspects with arrest warrants. The Clermont County Grand Jury returned a total of 203 felony counts against individuals involving possession and trafficking in drugs.

The investigation was initiated in 2008 by the Clermont County Drug Task Force and Union Township Police Department as a result of the dramatic increase in drug complaints, crimes, overdoses and deaths specifically involving black tar heroin. The investigation, known as Habit Breaker, resulted in the seizure of pharmaceuticals, marijuana, cocaine and over 1800 grams of heroin. The estimated value of the drugs seized or purchased is \$496,815.

DART NORTHEAST HAMILTON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE



DART has been making arrests for trafficking in heroin, marijuana,

pharmaceuticals and cocaine. The task force has made a couple ecstasy buys in the 200 count. They have not encountered any contamination in the drugs and have not observed any unusual trends or methods of shipment or sales of these drugs.

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

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

The Drug Task Force arranged a controlled buy of 1,000 ecstasy tablets and orchestrated a traffic stop with the patrol units of the Delaware County Sheriff's Office. Deputies located in the dashboard of the vehicle a brown paper bag that contained a gallon-size freezer bag with individually wrapped baggies containing ecstasy pills and dryer sheets.

The Drug Task Force is experiencing an alarming influx in the abuse and availability of heroin. Many addicts from the state of Ohio are traveling to the Columbus area to purchase heroin at a cheaper price and reselling it at a higher rate in their place of residency. Sources are advising they are purchasing heroin in Columbus for \$8.00 per balloon and reselling it for \$20.00-\$40.00 per balloon.

FAIRFIELD/HOCKING MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

The drugs most prevalent within the Major Crimes jurisdiction are: heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine.

Detectives with the Major Crimes Unit executed an arrest and search warrant in Hocking County outside of Laurelville, Ohio. At the time of arrest, the owner of the residence had a weapon in his possession and confronted officers upon their entry into the home. During the search of the residence, detectives found an indoor marijuana grow, cocaine, prescription medications, and 47 firearms. Also located on the property were 27 dogs, including five Pit Bulls with dog fighting paraphernalia.



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The Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit participated in operation "Busted Balloon" which was a multi-county focus on heroin trafficking on the U.S. Route 33 corridor. Agencies from Franklin, Fairfield, Hocking and Athens counties and the Ohio State Highway Patrol participated in the enforcement effort. Multiple arrest and search warrants were executed along with heightened traffic enforcement in several of the jurisdictions.

GRAND LAKE TASK FORCE

Grand Lake Task Force is observing a continued rise in heroin use. Marijuana and prescription drug use remains a continuing problem.

LAWRENCE DRUG AND MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs are prescription drugs, crack cocaine and marijuana. Lawrence County's most serious problem is prescription drug trafficking and abuse. Bordering states of Kentucky and West Virginia were listed as two of the top five states in the nation for prescribing drugs (*Forbes, 2008*). The task force sees many individuals traveling to Florida pain clinics, obtaining various narcotics, and returning to sell the drugs illegally.

During an October 8-9 Grand Jury, 27 individuals were indicted for felony drug cases. The majority of those cases were a result of a three-month undercover investigation conducted against individuals selling prescription narcotics and crack cocaine. All suspects have now been arrested and await court proceedings in Common Pleas Court. During the arrests several hundred pain pills were recovered.

On October 13, task force personnel assisted federal agents in Scioto County in the execution of a search warrant at a Portsmouth pain clinic.

On the night of October 21, while working drug investigations in the City of Ironton, task force personnel responded to an aggravated robbery at an area bar. The bartender had been struck in the head with a handgun and the establishment robbed. Task force personnel followed a trail of coins and cash to a house two blocks away and arrested the subject within minutes after the robbery. The subject had been out of prison less than a year and had been incarcerated for aggravated robbery.

LORAIN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Heroin abuse remains the number one problem in the Lorain County Drug Task Force's jurisdiction. This is followed by the availability of cocaine, crack cocaine and pharmaceutical drugs.

Task force agents served four secret indictments for heroin trafficking and a fifth was served which developed probable cause to obtain a search warrant for a residence where an indoor marijuana grow was dismantled. A second search warrant was executed at another residence where an additional grow was located and dismantled.

The task force arrested a woman who stole approximately 25 blank prescription forms from a doctor's office and passed them at numerous locations. They also sent a case to the prosecutor on a doctor shopper. Lorain County is currently conducting a joint investigation with W.E.B. concerning a group of persons who are passing bogus prescriptions around Lorain and Cuyahoga Counties.

Operation Medicine Cabinet, Lorain County's first prescription turn-in program, resulted in the collection of 560 pounds of prescription medications. Drop off locations were set up at 13 participating police stations and one fire station.

Lorain County also participated with various agencies in a large scale boat interdiction program on Lake Erie as part of the Northern Boarder Initiative.

MAHONING VALLEY LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

The Mahoning Valley Law Enforcement Task Force continues to experience an urban drug problem that has spread from Youngstown to the suburban and rural areas of the county. Drugs of choice continue to be powder and crack cocaine, followed by heroin and marijuana. The diversion of prescription drugs continues to be a problem. Ecstasy appears from time to time but never in great quantity. Methamphetamine trafficking and use has so far been limited; no labs have been reported or discovered this year.

MEDINA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

During the month of October, 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 hydroponic marijuana have been made. Trafficking and abuse of pharmaceutical drugs is 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.

The Medina County Drug Task Force would like to welcome Gary Hubbard as the new director of the Drug Task Force. Gary started as director on Monday, November 2, 2009. Gary's contact information will be as follows: Director Gary Hubbard, g Hubbard@medinaco.org, Medina County Drug Task Force, P.O. Box 1643, Medina, Ohio 44258, Office - (330)725-9181, Cell - (330)350-2828, www.mcddf.org

MEDWAY DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

The MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency has seen another very busy month. The drug of choice during the past month has been cocaine, followed by prescription drugs. The task force has seen a significant increase in purchases of prescription drugs including: oxycodone, morphine and Vicodin.

The MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency concluded an eleven-month drug investigation in and around the City of Brunswick in Medina County, Ohio on October 1, 2009. During the course of the investigation, large amounts of cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA), marijuana and a

variety of prescription drugs were purchased. Seven arrest teams served 26 Warrants on Indictment which included four defendants that were already in a correctional facility. A variety of drugs were seized at various arrest locations with additional charges to be filed. The roundup was very successful with the cooperative effort of several law enforcement agencies that support the MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency. Assisting agencies were Brunswick Police Department, Wayne County Sheriff's Office, Holmes County Sheriff's Office, Wooster Police Department, Orrville Police Department, Wadsworth Police Department, Medina County Drug Task Force, Medina Police Department, Brunswick Hills Police Department, Brooklyn Police Department, Strongsville Police Department, Seven Hills Police Department and Brook Park Police Department. Investigation continues with additional arrests pending.

The Pharmaceutical Diversion Investigators have continued to be very busy. The calls they are receiving from hospitals and physicians continue to increase on a weekly basis. On October 17, 2009 the task force conducted their first "Operation Safe Return" for unwanted and outdated controlled and non-controlled drugs in Holmes County. The response was not as good as expected but they did collect 17 1/2 pounds of controlled drugs and 33 pounds of non-controlled drugs and over-the-counter drugs. The individuals that came out were very appreciative that the program was available to them. Additional dates have already been scheduled for 2010.

METRICH ENFORCEMENT UNIT

The METRICH Task Force is primarily seeing cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, diverted pharmaceuticals, marijuana and ecstasy.

Recently, in Richland County (Bellville Police Department), a substance was submitted to BCI that was thought to be LSD. However, the substance was actually found to be a designer drug that is not scheduled by the State of Ohio, but is federally. The drug was presented as a sugar cube wrapped in aluminum foil. The street name for the drug is "D.O.I." The real name of the substance is: 4-iodo-2,5 dimethoxyamphetamine.

MULTI-AREA NARCOTICS (MAN) UNIT

Drugs prevalent in the jurisdiction include marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs including: Oxycontin, oxymorphone, Vicodin and morphine.

Marijuana remains consistent and the cost is high. Crack cocaine is more prevalent than powder cocaine, and Oxycontin is very popular.

Arrests for October totaled 18 individuals. MAN Unit officers initiated 36 new cases this month, and eight searches were executed.

NORTHERN OHIO LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs in Northern Ohio include cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, MDMA and pharmaceutical abuse drugs.

The task force has observed a citywide increase in homicides. A slow down in highway interdiction seizures may be due to higher than normal rainfall in Mexico.

During the month of October, 2009, 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. Their multi-state trafficking organizations are operating in the Cleveland metropolitan area and are distributing cocaine, marijuana, and heroin.

NOLETF has infiltrated these organizations utilizing informants, undercover agents, and Title III telephonic wire intercepts. During 2009, NOLETF continued to monitor Title III telephone wire intercepts in connection with a Mexican DTO. NOLETF seized one kilo of cocaine, 150 pounds of marijuana and approximately \$100,000.

Additionally, members of the NOLETF assisted in the manhunt for Anthony Sowell, who was arrested on October 31 for rape and is suspected in the rape, kidnapping and murder of six additional victims who were found secreted in the walls and floors of his home on Cleveland's east side.

OTTAWA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The predominate street drugs in Ottawa County this month have been cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana and prescription drugs.

The Task Force conducted nine new controlled buy cases with agents purchasing over nine ounces of cocaine in Sandusky and Ottawa Counties. The Task Force is assisting local law enforcement with two new overdoses from prescription drugs. One of the overdoses was fatal. The task force opened numerous prescription drug diversion cases stemming from information obtained from local pharmacists.

SOUTHEAST AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (SEALE)

The SEALE Task Force continues to work a number of heroin cases within its jurisdiction. Heroin addicts seem to be responsible for a large portion of the thefts, burglaries and robberies within the seven-city SEALE jurisdiction.

Other drugs readily available include cocaine, crack, ecstasy, marijuana and prescription medications.

The task force ended a six-month investigation involving an unwitting middleman selling ounces of cocaine to a SEALE undercover narcotics detective. At least five controlled buys were completed using the middleman which resulted in five search warrants. During the search of an apartment in Bedford, detectives located two kilos of uncut cocaine, 180 grams of crack cocaine and two bundles of heroin. The two individuals arrested for the cocaine had minimal criminal histories and were believed to have been operating for years. One of the kilos was packaged in brown packaging tape with the word "Corona" written in black marker under a layer of tape. It is believed the cocaine was picked up in the Chicago area. Other

searches involved with the case resulted in the seizure of prescription pills, a handgun and two more ounces of cocaine.

The task force also executed three other search warrants in the month of October which resulted in the seizure of crack cocaine and over \$22,000 in cash. The task force has 11 active cases pending with several more slated to begin as others are closed. The task force continues to receive a tremendous amount of information relating to mid- and high-level drug traffickers within the area.

SOUTHEASTERN NARCOTICS TEAM (SENT) TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs in the jurisdiction are crack hcl, crack cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and pharmaceuticals including: Percocet, Darvocet, Xanax and hydrocodone.

During October, S.E.N.T. initiated seven new cases and has 11 cases pending. A recent pharmaceutical case involves the diversion of 750 hydrocodone doses via fraudulent scripts. The task force continues its coordination with Zanesville PD regarding the trafficking of ounces of cocaine hcl through Belmont, Guernsey and Muskingham counties. The Bellaire Police Department (Belmont County) narcotics unit is rendering assistance with this investigation.

STARK COUNTY METROPOLITAN NARCOTICS UNIT

Marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs are prevalent in Stark County.

A federal arrest was made regarding Stark County's ongoing marijuana conspiracy case.

Forty-six marijuana plants, approximately one pound of marijuana and one weapon were seized in a joint investigation. The US Marshall's Office discovered a marijuana grow while serving a federal warrant.

Cleveland Narcotics interdicted 6.85 kilos of cocaine, and an attempt to deliver this package in Stark County ended in negative results.

Approximately 90 pounds of marijuana were interdicted at a local shipping facility and the investigation continues.

One small package containing two baggies of marijuana was also interdicted at a local shipping facility.

The task force assisted the North Canton Police Department on the discovery of a rolling meth lab located in their city. One individual was arrested.

A search warrant was served at a residence which completed a 2008 case. A marijuana grow and 103 plants were seized. One arrest is pending.

SUMMIT COUNTY DRUG UNIT

Cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine, MDMA, GHB, ketamine, Oxycontin

and other pharmaceuticals are prevalent in Summit County.

During August, interdiction efforts resulted in the seizure of ten parcels containing marijuana with a combined weight of 106.25 pounds, six kilograms of cocaine, and more than \$14,000 in United States Currency. On October 26, 2009, following a short investigation, investigators from the Summit County Drug Unit executed a search warrant at an indoor marijuana grow located on Dallas Street in the City of Akron. Grow equipment, 48 marijuana plants in various stages of growth, cocaine, MDMA, psilocybin mushrooms and United States currency were seized. One suspect has been arrested.

TRUMBULL-ASHTABULA GROUP (TAG)

Prevalent drugs in the TAG jurisdiction include marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin, methamphetamine and prescription drugs.

With ridiculously high unemployment, drug sales continue to rise. The reduction in law enforcement personnel in area departments has placed an additional burden on the task force. Heroin and prescription drugs are our most prevalent problem with the majority of our heroin coming from Detroit.

U.S. 23 PIPELINE MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE

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

Three task force positions (pharmaceutical diversion investigator, administrative assistant and agent) were filled; employees started October 1, 2009. Due to funding, two full time agents were pulled from the task force this month by two Ross County agencies.

Agents are purchasing prescription drugs off the street on a daily basis. These drugs include Oxycontin, Percocet and Vicodin. Agents are also continuing covert investigations on burglary and theft rings in the area.

WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Marijuana, cocaine, prescription drugs, and heroin are prevalent in Warren County.

The task force is making progress on a large marijuana operation in their area that stretches deep into Kentucky and much of southern Ohio.

Progress has also been made on a large money laundering and cocaine operation being worked with multiple federal agencies. Undercover work is due to start soon on the operation.

WEST CENTRAL OHIO CRIME TASK FORCE

During the month of October the West Central Ohio Crime Task Force continued to purchase crack, cocaine, marijuana, heroin and Dilaudid. The task force purchased heroin, marijuana and cocaine in Paulding County. Task force agents executed one search warrant seizing cash, cocaine, guns and paraphernalia. Also during October, the West Central Ohio Crime Task Force participated in a roundup of local drug dealers in conjunction with the FBI, Lima Police Department, Allen County Sheriff's Office and BCI & I. During this

OTFCA Members Reporting in October 2009

roundup a total of 15 subjects were arrested and charged with various felony drug charges; four were charged federally. As a result of this roundup, three search warrants were executed and crack, paraphernalia and marijuana were seized. A marijuana growing operation was dismantled as a result of one of these search warrants. As a result of a short term investigation, two pounds of marijuana and ecstasy were seized from a local individual.

WESTSHORE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (WEB)

During the month of October 2009, the street drug unit prosecuted cases involving marijuana and steroids.

Current trends remain the same with diversion complaints at an all time high. The diversion unit prosecuted cases involving Vicodin, Valium, Darvocet, tramadol, Lorcet and Suboxone.

The unit was also involved with two theft cases, one of which is an ongoing booster scenario from multiple Target Corporation stores in which multiple suspected heroin addicts are involved.

On October 3, 2009, the task force conducted its second annual "Operation Medicine Cabinet" for outdated and unwanted pharmaceutical drugs. The collection total was 206.5 pounds of scheduled, non-scheduled and a limited number of over-the-counter medications. A total of 149 individuals participated, representing all six western suburbs that our task force serves, in addition to a handful of individuals from Lorain County. This event will be conducted twice a year starting in 2010 due to requests from a number of citizens.

A search warrant was executed on a residence as a result of a ten-pound marijuana controlled delivery in which the female suspect's mother was servicing a male in a rear bedroom. The resident/suspect had a prostitution business later found to be advertised on backpage.com.



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

Lawrence Drug and Major Crimes Task Force

Commander Timothy W. Sexton

Lorain County Dug Task Force

Captain Dennis E. Cavanaugh

Mahoning Valley Law Enforcement Task Force

Lt. Robin Lees

Medina County Drug Task Force

Director Gary Hubbard

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

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