



COMMANDERS MONTHLY

A MONTHLY REPORT OF OHIO'S TASK FORCE ACTIVITY

September 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.

September Narratives: Drug Prevalence and Monthly Criminal Activity

CENTRAL OHIO DRUG ENFORCEMENT (CODE) TASK FORCE

The task force continues to see crack cocaine and methamphetamine as the prevalent drugs in the area.

The Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force conducted three search warrants arresting twelve individuals who were charged with possession, drug trafficking or permitting drug abuse. Crack cocaine and methamphetamine were recovered from the warrants. BCI&I requested that the task force respond to a methamphetamine laboratory. This resulted in three arrests.

COLUMBIANA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

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

On September 8, the Columbiana County Drug Task Force executed a search warrant at a residence and discovered an operating methamphetamine lab. The lab was of the one pot variety and was located in the bedroom of a trailer. The contents of the Mason jar could be seen bubbling and occasional flashes occurred when pieces of lithium came in contact with water in the jar. One subject has been charged with production of methamphetamine along with other charges. This is the fifth lab discovered in the county this year. In comparison only two labs were found in all of 2008. All five labs were of the one pot variety.

The United States Marshal's Service and Drug Enforcement Administration assisted the drug task force in a drug indictment roundup netting 18 subjects on various charges.

DART NORTHEAST HAMILTON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

DART has been encountering the usual street drugs: cocaine, heroin, marijuana and pharmaceuticals.

Thirteen arrests were made in September for trafficking. The task force has not encountered any unusual trends in the transporting or sale of these drugs.

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

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

During the month of September, members of the drug task force focused on conducting eight search warrants at suspected crack houses in the city of Delaware. The search warrants proved to be extremely successful, resulting in the seizure of crack cocaine, marijuana, paraphernalia, a firearm and U.S. currency. In addition, the Delaware County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division contacted the drug task force to obtain a search warrant on a vehicle; multiple hidden compartments were located in the Chevy Tahoe and one compartment contained approximately 70 grams of cocaine.

The Delaware County L.E.A.P. Drug Task Force is observing an alarming influx in the abuse and availability of heroin and pharmaceutical substances.

FAIRFIELD/HOCKING MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

Heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine are the prevalent drugs in the Fairfield/Hocking area.

Detectives with the Major Crimes Unit executed a search warrant on a residence in the Lancaster, Ohio area where numerous purchases were being made in heroin and crack cocaine. Five individuals were arrested, including the primary



suspect in the case. The main source was released from the penitentiary in April of this year after serving five years from a previous drug trafficking charge in a prior investigation by the Major Crimes Unit. In his possession at the time of arrest was 30 grams of crack cocaine, 58 unit doses of heroin, and a semi-automatic hand gun.

The Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit and the Wood County Sheriff's Office from Parkersburg, West Virginia worked a joint investigation on a mid level heroin trafficker in their jurisdiction. A female suspect was using the U.S. Route 33 corridor to travel to Columbus, Ohio approximately three to four times a week to re-supply for distribution in the Parkersburg area. The suspect was arrested after meeting with an upper level supplier of Mexican descent, in the south end of Columbus. The Central Ohio HIDTA is also assisting in the investigation in reference to the heroin drug trafficking organizations in Columbus related to this case.

GRAND LAKE TASK FORCE

The Grand Lake Task Force is observing a continued rise in prescription pill sales and heroin use.

GREENE COUNTY AGENCIES FOR COMBINED ENFORCEMENT (ACE) TASK FORCE

The Greene County Agencies for Combined Enforcement (ACE Task Force), the Greene County Sheriff's Office, the State of Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification, and the Beavercreek Police Department conducted a search warrant at 1571 Arrowwood Drive, Beavercreek, Ohio, on September 23, 2009. Information was gained through a confidential source that an indoor marijuana grow existed at the residence. Personnel from the State of Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification conducted a Thermal Imaging of the dwelling on September 22, 2009 with positive results.

Evidence obtained from the service of the search warrant at 1571 Arrowwood Drive included but was not limited to; 35 mature marijuana plants, equipment utilized to conduct the marijuana grow, a quantity of processed marijuana, one safe, and a 1999 GMC Truck. All information and evidence will be submitted to the Greene County Prosecutor's Office for future charges.

On September 1, 2009, Greene County experienced several breaking and entering complaints which included a grand theft auto. The task force assisted in the investigation by utilizing undercover operatives from the task force to purchase items that were stolen. The task force coordinated a multi-jurisdictional effort with the Dayton Police Department and Riverside Police Department which led to numerous search warrants being conducted. The search warrants disclosed several other items of stolen property including but not limited to; handguns, other weapons and property belonging to victims of these crimes. Between the months of April and August 2009, approximately 150 to 200 burglaries and other crimes could be attributed to the actions of this organization. A total of seven suspects were arrested for Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity to Commit Aggravated Burglary and other theft related crimes.

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 predominant street drugs in Lake County this month have been cocaine, crack cocaine, MDMA, and marijuana.

Lake County Narcotics has made over 19 controlled buys. Four individuals were charged with either complicity, permitting drug abuse or other related drug charges. Two search warrants were executed and one marijuana outdoor grow was discovered. The outdoor marijuana grow was discovered by an OSHP plane and consisted of 60 large plants. No suspects have been identified and the grow has been dismantled.

One female was arrested for selling tar heroin in balloons. She sold 30 balloons and was in possession of an additional 25. This was a first in Lake County since tar has only been purchased once approximately five years ago. The majority of heroin in Lake County is white and sold in bindles.

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

LAWRENCE DRUG AND MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs in Lawrence County are prescription drugs, crack cocaine, and marijuana.

The tri-state region (WV, KY, OH) has experienced an increase in heroin with the central distribution at Huntington, West Virginia.

The 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 our nation for prescribing drugs (*Forbes, 2008*). Many individuals from the Lawrence county area are traveling to Florida pain clinics, obtaining various narcotics, and returning to sell the drugs illegally. On the evening of September 28, task force personnel made an interdiction stop on four subjects returning from Florida clinics. The four vehicle occupants were arrested and agents recovered 630 oxycodone 30 mg pills and 120 alprazolam pills. In addition, the task force will seek to obtain indictments against 15 to 20 people for prescription drug trafficking in their October grand jury.

On September 25 Lawrence Drug and Major Crimes Task Force personnel and personnel from a federal task force out of Charleston, West Virginia conducted a raid in Ironton. As a result, nearly thirty pounds of marijuana, numerous weapons, and over \$70,000 cash was seized.

To enhance task force efforts, two task force members attended the recent Ohio Attorney General's Conference. Two others will attend the upcoming NARCO conference in Columbus.

LORAIN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Heroin continues to be the number one problem, followed by the availability of cocaine, crack cocaine, pharmaceutical drugs and marijuana. The task force is also starting to see an increase in the availability of ecstasy.

Nine arrests were made on secret indictments for trafficking in heroin, marijuana and prescription drugs. The task force has made undercover purchases of heroin, cocaine, marijuana and ecstasy. Agents also made one arrest and shut down a clandestine methamphetamine lab. This is the second time this person has been charged. A nurse accused of stealing pain medications from a nursing home was indicted and arrested, and the task force did three other joint investigations with the Board of Nursing. One nurse was suspected of stealing pain medications from a nursing home. She denied the incident but admitted to stealing from her past employer. A second nurse admitted to stealing pain medications from a hospital emergency room. The third nurse was convicted on felony drug charges in May but continued to work as a nurse after her license was suspended.

Lorain County Drug Task Force conducted a joint investigation with The Westshore Enforcement Bureau in which they arrested a man from Youngstown who was traveling to Lorain County for Tussionex using bogus prescriptions. It is likely that he will be indicted in at least one other county as he has admitted to over a dozen similar incidents. He has six prior felony drug convictions and three prior convictions for carrying a concealed weapon. Finally, Lorain County Drug Task Force participated in a successful large scale boat interdiction program over the Labor Day weekend as part of the Northern Border Initiative.

MAHONING VALLEY LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

The Mahoning Valley continues to experience an urban drug problem that has spread to the suburban and rural areas of the county from Youngstown. 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, and no labs have been reported or discovered this year.

MEDWAY DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

The MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency continues to have a very busy summer. The current drug of choice is crack cocaine followed by marijuana and cocaine.

This past month, MEDWAY was able to seize 65 plants by an air search. In 2009 the task force has been able to seize approximately 130 plants that have been growing outdoors. They hope to find funding to fly again next year.

The Pharmaceutical Drug Diversion Unit has also been very busy. They currently have approximately 40 cases open and

another 230 leads. The program has taken off much better than expected and the task force continues to receive calls from new doctors and pharmacies.

On September 19, 2009, the task force conducted "Operation Safe Return" for outdated and unwanted pharmaceutical drugs. They collected 23.5 pounds of scheduled drugs worth approximately \$200,000 according to the pharmacist on site. Task force members also collected 241.5 pounds of non scheduled drugs as well as over the counter items worth approximately \$500,000. This was the first event and the task force received drugs from roughly 100 people, most of who were from the Wooster area. Several additional collection dates have been set.

METRICH ENFORCEMENT UNIT

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

The Task Force continues to receive reports of individuals traveling to Florida, obtaining several scripts after receiving cursory medical exams, and then returning to Ohio to use/sell these prescriptions. Additionally, reports have suggested that many youth are abusing diverted pharmaceuticals, such as football players who want to mitigate pain during games and practices.

Hancock County reported a possession case involving Salvia divinorum, the first throughout the region since the new law took effect earlier this year.

MULTI-AREA NARCOTICS (MAN) UNIT

Prevalent drugs in the MAN Unit jurisdiction include: marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, and prescription drugs such as Oxycontin, Oxymorphone, Vicodin and morphine. Marijuana remains consistent with a high cost. Crack cocaine is more prevalent than powder cocaine. Oxycontin is very popular, and the area is seeing an increase in ecstasy.

Arrests for August totaled seven individuals. MAN Unit officers initiated 29 new cases this month. Five Searches were executed.

NORTHERN OHIO LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

Cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, MDMA, and pharmaceutical abuse drugs are most prevalent in Northern Ohio.

There has been a slight decrease in homicides in the jurisdiction as compared to the same time last year. The Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force has seen a slow down in highway interdiction amounts. Marijuana arrests for 2009 are slightly higher than this time in 2008.

During the month of September, 2009, the Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force, which consists of federal, state and local law enforcement, initiated several investigations into traditional and gang related narcotic trafficking organizations.

These multi-state trafficking organizations are operating in the Cleveland, Ohio area and are distributing cocaine, heroin and marijuana.

NOLETF has infiltrated these organizations utilizing informants, undercover agents, and Title III telephonic wire intercepts. On September 13, 2009, NOLETF executed arrest and search warrants as a result of a Title III wire intercept investigation. This investigation targeted the Dantae Chambliss DTO. As a result, 54 kilos of cocaine, one kilo of heroin, seven motor vehicles, one handgun, and \$30,000 were seized. Five arrests were made.

OTTAWA COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

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

The Task Force assisted Ottawa County Law Enforcement with the apprehension of a juvenile from Huron County who was wanted for auto larceny. Task force agents apprehended the juvenile after he broke into an Ottawa County residence and then fled the scene. Agents spotted the stolen vehicle and followed it to a church parking lot where they boxed the vehicle in and apprehended the lone juvenile without incident. The juvenile faces charges for various criminal offenses in Ottawa and Huron Counties.

SOUTHEAST AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE (SEALE)

During the month of September, the SEALE Narcotics Task Force continued to see heroin sales and usage skyrocket. After making several controlled purchases of heroin from a dealer in Bedford Heights, Detectives executed a search warrant on the dealer's residence ultimately recovering about 81 unit doses of heroin. Information obtained has lead SEALE to a major heroin supplier in the area. The investigation is pending.

Another heroin case involving several individuals was nearly complete when the brother and cousin of one of the original suspects made a delivery during a controlled buy. Those two individuals were arrested on the scene. Several days later, one of the original suspects and several others ran into one of SEALE's confidential informants and attacked and assaulted said CI who required medical attention from the assault. Most of the suspects have been identified and charged. The case is awaiting presentation to the Cuyahoga County Grand Jury.

SEALE has made controlled buys of crack cocaine from several individuals utilizing an unwitting middleman and CI. These cases are under investigation with arrests and search warrants expected.

In two unrelated cases, SEALE has been receiving information on individuals since February. In the first case, information had been received indicating that an individual was suspected of dealing out of a residence in Garfield Heights. The investigation had gone somewhat stale until an anonymous tip was received that marijuana plants were being cultivated behind the individual's garage. The plants were verified and a search warrant was obtained and executed. Inside the house,

detectives found a marijuana grow operation in the basement and confiscated equipment and nearly 40 marijuana plants.

In the second case, SEALE learned that an individual was getting large quantities of marijuana sent through the United States Post Office from Arizona and Michigan. Detectives assisted U.S. postal inspectors in a controlled delivery of ten pounds of marijuana to a residence in Garfield Heights. Coincidentally, the individuals that accepted the package were the subjects of SEALE's investigation. Thirty pounds of marijuana were recovered, and the task force was finally able to identify one of the suppliers from out of state.

SOUTHEASTERN NARCOTICS TEAM (SENT) TASK FORCE

Prevalent drugs in the community include cocaine, Cocaine Hydrochloride, crack cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, Oxycontin, Xanax, Percocet and Vicodin.

In September, SENT provided a confidential informant to the Zanesville Police Department. The task force also assisted in executing a high risk search warrant in their jurisdiction which resulted in five new cases involving possession and trafficking in crack cocaine with a total of sixteen counts. Schedule two pharmaceuticals were also recovered at the residence.

Locally, the task force has registered an additional ten cases also involving sixteen counts of drug trafficking, predominantly in crack and powder cocaine as well as schedule two pharmaceuticals. The task force has worked three interdiction cases with the uniform division of Cambridge Police Department and executed a search warrant wherein eighteen grams of crack cocaine was recovered in addition to a stolen handgun and schedule two pharmaceuticals. The task force has an additional four cases pending.

STARK COUNTY METROPOLITAN NARCOTICS UNIT

Most prevalent drugs in this jurisdiction include marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription drugs.

The SENT Task Force investigated six small outdoor marijuana grows this period that resulted in the seizure of over 60 plants. The task force assisted the North Canton Police Department in an investigation in which a rolling meth lab was discovered in their city. Two individuals were arrested. This lab was being transported to another location when a traffic stop was initiated. A parcel interdiction of two 50 pound packages of marijuana led to the arrest of the two individuals. The task force assisted Jackson Township Police in the apprehension of four felony drug traffickers and also assisted the Carroll County Sheriff's Office. Several cases remain under investigation.

SUMMIT COUNTY DRUG UNIT

Cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine (glass), MDMA (ecstasy), GHB, Ketamine, Oxycontin and other pharmaceuticals are prevalent in Summit County.

During August, interdiction efforts have resulted in the seizure of eight parcels containing marijuana with a combined weight

of 147 pounds. This represents a street value in excess of \$192,000. On September 10, 2009, one parcel containing four pounds of marijuana was intercepted by a SCDU canine interdiction team. The parcel was sent from Lynwood, California to a subject in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Further investigation revealed that Lynwood authorities were able to identify the sender and locate his residence. The parcel was returned to California authorities for the purpose of executing search and arrest warrants.

On September 11, 2009 Summit County Drug Unit investigators concluded a 21 month Title III investigation into a cocaine distribution drug trafficking organization involving Mexican traffickers. As a result, investigators arrested a local Summit County trafficking target and a courier. Investigators also seized eight kilograms of cocaine concealed between two radiators in a 2001 GMC sierra pick-up truck. Stones were placed between the kilograms to allow airflow to continue.

TRUMBULL-ASHTABULA GROUP (TAG)

Marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin, methamphetamine and prescription Drugs are prevalent in the TAG enforcement area.

Drug complaints continue to grow with no end in sight. TAG was successful in eradicating a substantial amount of marijuana this year using small fixed wing aircraft and searching corn fields. The task force encourages others who have not used this tactic to start mapping possible locations and searching fields early in the season as growers start transferring plants outdoors. Additionally, the task force would like to thank BCI & I and the Ohio State Highway Patrol for assisting in their efforts.

TAG is currently planning a pharmaceutical drug disposal and recycling program to collect unwanted prescription drugs in their communities.

Additionally, TAG is working on a project using overt law enforcement tactics to disrupt drug trafficking in urban areas and identify multiple drug users.

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.

After receiving stimulus money to replace personnel the task force has hired a pharmaceutical diversion investigator, an administrative assistant and an agent. This will reestablish a pharmaceutical program and replace two of the positions lost in recent layoffs and transfers.

On September 19, 2009 the task force investigated an anonymous call of marijuana growing behind a residence in Ross County. After spotting the plants a search warrant was executed and 31 marijuana plants were confiscated along with processed marijuana and paraphernalia. Charges are pending against three people living at the residence.

WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

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

The Warren County Drug Task Force is working with ICE and Hamilton County SO (RENU) on a large cocaine trafficking operation that is in the process of being dismantled. Multiple kilos have been seized.

There is a large ongoing interstate marijuana case, and the task force is working towards search warrants and arrest warrants in at least two states.

Large money laundering and cocaine trafficking cases are being run out of local businesses. This will hopefully end with federal arrests and seizures within the next 30 days.

WEST CENTRAL OHIO CRIME TASK FORCE

The West Central Ohio Crime Task Force has been busy in September 2009. Twenty-nine new cases involving large and moderate purchases of marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, Dilaudid and heroin have been made. Additionally, two search warrants were served and yielded seizures of marijuana and cash. The task force also, with the aid of the Ohio State Highway Patrol, conducted marijuana eradication which proved fruitful. The task force worked one case with the Allen County Sheriff's Office Detective Bureau which resulted in the service of another search warrant, thousands of dollars of stolen property and a number of guns being recovered.

WESTSHORE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU (WEB)

During the month of September 2009, the street drug unit prosecuted cases involving marijuana, crack cocaine, powder cocaine and heroin.

The diversion unit prosecuted cases involving Oxycontin, Vicodin and Percocet.

The unit assisted one of the local agencies with liquor stings involving local businesses selling to underage individuals. WEB also assisted with a stolen property investigation and a sexual conduct case involving internet contact by an out of county adult with at least two local underage females.

Current trends remain the same with a noticeable increase in the availability of heroin.



OTFCA Members Reporting in September 2009

Central Ohio Drug Enforcement (CODE) Task Force

Lieutenant Tom Brown

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

Lt. Robin Lees

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

Southeastern Narcotics Team Task Force (SENT)

Commander Bernie Beltz

Southeast Area Law Enforcement Task Force (SEALE)

Detective Brian Byard

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