

NORTHWEST HIDTA

Serving the needs of fourteen Northwest Counties: Benton, Clark, Cowlitz, Franklin, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima.



Message from the Director



Dave Rodriguez

It is with great pleasure that I announce that Robert C. Wicklund has been selected as the new Program Coordinator for the Northwest HIDTA. Bob has just finished a distinguished career with the U.S. Coast Guard where he attained the rank of Captain. Bob is a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College and was also the Deputy Director of the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) for three years. Welcome aboard Bob.

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By now all of the HIDTA Initiatives should have received the Award Letters for 2004. They were FedEx'd out to all award recipients on March 29. It also appears that the 2004 supplemental will be released shortly. This means that the task forces in Spokane, Clark, Lewis and Cowlitz will be receiving funding much earlier than last year. However, the supplemental is still limited to \$250,000.

I would also like to make you aware that HIDTA is assisting CTED in the peer review program of Bryne Grant task forces. It is felt that this complements the HIDTA self review program that is conducted the last quarter of every year. It also helps us validate information received in the annual survey.

On a sad note the National HIDTA Director, Kurt Schmid, was reassigned to head the Counter Drug Technology Assessment Center at ONDCP. Kurt was previously the HIDTA Director in Chicago, Illinois. In his farewell remarks Kurt credited the work of the participating agencies for making the HIDTA program successful. He is a true professional and will be greatly missed by his colleagues.

Significant progress was made on the HIDTA.net project with a total of 50 users connected in 2003.

While the process isn't perfect, and there have been some difficulties with a few individual accounts, it is still a good system and the only option we have for Secure email. We anticipate becoming a full Node on the HIDTA.NET within the next 60-90 days

As for the HIDTA.net node status, all of the equipment has been purchased and delivered, the application has been submitted and approved, and RISS.net is ordering the data.

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Update

Prevention/Treatment Initiative

This edition of the Northwest HIDTA Newsletter allows an opportunity to look back at the outputs and outcomes accomplished in 2003 by the Prevention/Treatment Initiative. In spite of several notable changes that took place, the past year can be characterized by progress and an increase in productivity for most of the projects that comprise the Initiative.

In regard to the overall administration of the Prevention/Treatment Initiative, 2003 began with the selection of a new fiscal agent for the Initiative. Educational Service District 105, located in Yakima, assumed responsibility for our financial activities and oversight, ensuring a smooth transition from the service previously provided by the Washington State Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. The ESD has proved to be a good fit with the Northwest HIDTA, ably supporting the administration of 21 subcontracts and a wide range of expenditures and activities throughout the year.

The past year also marked the first time that Northwest HIDTA resources were allocated to each of the Drug Court programs within our region. Eleven Drug Courts are now operating within the HIDTA, ranging in tenure from the programs in Pierce, Spokane and King counties – which have observed or are fast approaching 10-year service anniversaries – to the more recently implemented programs in Clark and Cowlitz counties. Overall, Northwest HIDTA-supported Drug Court program services were provided to over 2,100 participants in 2003, representing a 17% increase over the previous year.

As detailed in a previous edition of the Newsletter, 2003 also saw a major reconfiguration of our Community Coalition Support projects. Several projects were concluded and replaced by means of an RFP process, representing a shift from approaches based on service programs for youth and families to an emphasis on the Meth Action Teams that have developed throughout the region. While this resulted in a decrease in total outputs, the projects were nonetheless involved in over 175 community events attended by over 7,500 citizens, and continued to support seven service programs that served over 500 youth and families.

The enhanced focus on Meth Action Teams and regional

activities addressing methamphetamine did, however, result in an increase in outputs associated with our public education and awareness efforts. Over 40,000 brochures, 8,000 posters and 16,850 related print materials were distributed by Northwest HIDTA partners during the year, representing a 20% increase in the volume and number of materials provided to the public. Most notably, utilization of the “M-Files” Website (www.mfiles.org) increased 170%, with over 81,500 visitors and 1,965,000 hits recorded during 2003. This increase was due in part to a project implemented by the Office of the Washington State Lieutenant Governor, whereby advertisements were displayed in two multi-plex movie theaters for a period of two months, reaching over 36,000 moviegoers.

Given the performance of the Initiative during the transitions of 2003, further success and productivity is expected in 2004. For further information about the Northwest HIDTA Prevention/Treatment Initiative, Steve Freng can be contacted at 206.352.3603 and sfreg@nw.hidta.org.

The “M-Files” (www.mfiles.org) provides factual information about methamphetamine and marijuana for students, parents, teachers and citizens. In 2003, over 81,500 visitors accessed the “M-Files”, accounting for over 1,965,000 hits on the Website, representing an increase of 170% over 2002.

Training Opportunities 2004

July 26-30.....i2
August 3-5....Interview and Interrogation
August 18-20...International Money Laundering
To register for classes, please call Sherrie Funston at (206) 352-3648.

June							July							August						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4	5							1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				

Specially prepared for the ONDCP High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program.

Enforcement Highlights

Two recent seizures were consistent with the trend of cocaine moving north from the U.S. to Canada and pseudoephedrine coming south to the United States in Blaine, WA. On December 14, 2003, a north bound inspection resulted in one subject being arrested after 39 kilos of cocaine were found concealed in the spare tire of a pickup truck. The cocaine was wrapped in 36 individual packages. On March 12, 2004, two subjects were also arrested in Blaine, WA after a search of their southbound vehicle revealed 124 lb pseudoephedrine.



On December 17, the Washington State Patrol made a stop of a vehicle for a traffic violation and the strong odor of marijuana was noted emanating from the car. A K-9 was deployed and alerted on the car (westbound on I-90 at the time of the stop) and a search resulted in the confiscation of \$201,700 in U.S. dollars. A subsequent Ion Scan of the money confirmed the presence of marijuana residue.

On December 22, 2003, the DEA Spokane Task Force accepted a case after Border Agents confiscated almost 100 lb of cocaine valued at over 3 million dollars and two weapons that were being moved from San Jose, California, to the border. The intent of the suspects involved was to meet counterparts from British Columbia on a forest road north of Colville, WA and exchange the contraband for BC Bud. On November 29, 2003, on the West side of the Cascades near Lynden, border agents also confiscated 21 semi-automatic handguns that were going north in a probable smuggling attempt.

On January 15, 2004, the DEA Tacoma Drug Task Force concluded a two month long heroin investigation in Lakewood, WA by arresting three Mexican nationals after they delivered five lb of black tar heroin to a cooperating witness. A fingerprint analysis revealed that one of the suspects had recently been released from prison in California, had two prior drug convictions, and also had been deported from the U.S. on two prior occasions.

In January 2004, the DEA Tacoma Drug Task Force arrested a high school student from a high school on the Eastside of Lake Washington who had been selling OxyContin to other students and at local area "raves." His source of supply and another distributor (who was distributing OxyContin to students at Washington State University) were also subsequently arrested. The investigation further identified a car salesman in Lynnwood as

being the upper level of supply and the OxyContin as coming from California.

Several suspects were linked together during a two-month investigation by the Thurston County Narcotics Task Force, which began as a tip to the Thurston County Crime Stoppers. In December 2003, search warrants were served on five homes and four men were arrested. During the operation, there were 955 marijuana plants, 10 lb of processed marijuana, 10 lb of hallucinogenic mushrooms, three firearms and \$16,000 in cash seized.

In February 2004, the Unified Narcotics Enforcement Team completed a two-month investigation that resulted in the seizure of 500 marijuana plants with a street value of \$500,000 from a Centralia residence. The owner of the home had previously been arrested for growing marijuana.



In early March 2004, the HIDTA Integrated Task Force, with the Seattle Police Dept., the King County Sheriff's Office and the Eastside Narcotics Task Force, arrested a Seattle man for attempted manufacture of LSD. Haz-Mat crews carefully decontaminated the home where chemicals had been assembled at the suspect's Capitol Hill residence. The investigation was initiated after the suspect made Internet inquiries about obtaining large quantities of an LSD precursor chemical, ergotamine tartrate.



During the summer of 2003, the Law Enforcement Against Drug (LEAD) and DEA task forces in Yakima, WA initiated an investigation into a Mexican drug trafficking organization distribution of black tar heroin in the area. The investigation stemmed from the discovery of five Yakima Valley botulism cases and resulted in the LEAD and DEA working closely with the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, GA. The contaminated black tar heroin was eventually traced to 112 botulism cases, all on the West Coast. Three Yakima distributors were identified and two were arrested (a third is still a fugitive). Since another case of botulism was recently identified on the Western side of the Cascades, it is probable the source has yet to be arrested. Possible sources of the contamination are believed to be honey, shoe polish or chicken droppings used to cut the heroin.

Update

National Virtual Pointer System

Why a National Virtual Pointer System?

A critical need to facilitate information sharing through electronic connectivity and automation continues to exist among Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. To meet this challenge, DEA, HIDTA, and Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) managers met to create a virtual nationwide target deconfliction pointer system that would link existing target deconfliction systems. In January 2003, the entities established a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and working groups to manage the design and development of the National Virtual Pointer System (NVPS). The PSC and working groups are comprised of representatives from the DEA, HIDTA, RISS, the National Drug Intelligence Center, the National Institute of Justice, the National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies, and the National Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (NLETS).

What is NVPS?

The NVPS will be an automated system that connects existing target deconfliction pointer databases into one virtual pointer system. This will allow participating Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies access to all participating agency target deconfliction pointer databases through a single point of entry, i.e., HIDTA, National Drug Pointer Index (NDPIX), RISS, and other regional, state, and local deconfliction databases. Each system will maintain its own data. The transition to NVPS will be seamless to users.

How will NVPS Work?

- ◆ Each user must have a USERID and password from the appropriate participating system.
- ◆ Officer/agent enters investigative target data through HIDTA.net, NLETS, or RISS.net.
- ◆ Originating database verifies entry before submitting it to NVPS.
- ◆ Target data "race" through each participating database searching for a match.
- ◆ If no match is made, NVPS will return a negative response to the originating system.
- ◆ If a positive match is made:
 - NVPS will send originating system match notifications.
 - Notifications will contain information indicating in which system a match was found.
 - POC information will be returned to the originating and matching system.
 - No target specific information will be shared.
 - Target data will be stored in the originating system.
 - Officer/agent will contact each other to share information.

NVPS Operating Features

- ◆ Web-based communications.
- ◆ Investigative target deconfliction for all crimes.
- ◆ Linkage among HIDTA, NDPIX, and RISS.
- ◆ Single entry to eliminate duplicative data entry.
- ◆ Accepts only targets of open investigations with assigned case numbers.
- ◆ Uses mandatory data elements:
 - Agency ORI (Data Owner)
 - Agency case number
 - POC name
 - POC organization

- POC telephone number
- Target name
- Sex
- DOB or estimated age (+ or - 5 years)
- ◆ Optional data elements to include:
 - FBI number
 - SSN number

NVPS Update

The NVPS Project remains a top priority of Counterdrug Intelligence Executive Secretariat (CDX), DEA, and ONDCP. ONDCP-CDX Funds have been allocated in the Presidents FY2005 Budget to complete development and fully implement the NVPS. The system as developed (targets or names only) interfaces the NVPS messaging hub with existing deconfliction systems through RISS.net, HIDTA.net, or NLETS-NDPIX. The messaging hub matches seven mandatory data fields and provides instant deconfliction response to all connected systems. Each system vets users and provides deconfliction information as per the business rules of the connected system. No queries or searching allowed, only target entries, also no silent hits allowed. As determined by the PSC, silent hits are not information sharing, they are information gathering activities.

Data is currently passing between systems, and the central hub. The phase one projects are due to go live on-line, June 1, 2004, which will include Midwest HIDTA (SafetyNet), South Florida HIDTA (HIBIS), Missouri State Intel (MoSPIN), and NDPIX (DEA). All RISS Projects, and interface with the RISSIntel databases, will follow shortly. The cost to write a XML interface between existing Web-enabled deconfliction systems, and the NVPS middleware product should be reasonable (cheap) using the DOJ XML dictionary standard. NVPS has no vendors, uses no commercial products, and requires no licensing or special equipment. All HIDTAs using SafetyNet, or HIBIS, will be provided the XML bridge free of charge. What each HIDTA must have is an ORI, or have the lead agency in the ISC obtain a special ORI for the ISC and Watch Center, access or use of a Web-enabled compliant target deconfliction system, and have the system communicate via HIDTA.net (RISS.net), or use NDPIX.

NW HIDTA Critical Events

Since CY2000, the Watch Center has seen an annual increase in the number of Critical Events phoned in for deconfliction support. The addition of 7 additional counties to the NW HIDTA coverage area in late 2002 is a contributing factor to the increase during that reporting period. However, the full year impact of the added counties was shown in 2003. Already for the first quarter (1Q) of CY2004, CEVs called in by NW HIDTA Initiatives and participating agencies has surpassed figures recorded for the same period during the previous four years.

