

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

Just a note to let you know that Jerry Adams will be leaving us to work for the Central Valley HIDTA in Sacramento. His vacancy announcement will be published through the Washington State Patrol. It will be near impossible to replace Jerry because of the institutional knowledge that he has of the HIDTA program and of the knowledge, skills and abilities that he brings to this position. We will all miss Jerry but expect to see him frequently as he will be returning to Seattle to see family and friends as well as continuing his work with the HIDTA program. Jerry, from all of us at NW HIDTA thanks for your hard work and your commitment to the HIDTA program.

The 25 Cities Initiative continues to develop with the White Center area the focus for enhanced enforcement, treatment and prevention efforts. The enforcement leadership for this project is under the direction of Captain Jim Pryor, Seattle PD and Major Scott Somers, King County SO. The NW HIDTA program is preparing a threat assessment for this specific area.

HIDTA supplemental funds were approved and forwarded to Clark, Spokane and Lewis counties for implementation of their 2003 projects. It appears that the National HIDTA Program will be funded at \$226,000,000 the same as last year including supplemental funding. Also the Yakima DEA Task Force was awarded supplemental funding for their Consolidated Priority Organization Target (CPOT) designated investigation.

All drug task forces in the State should have received the latest HIDTA Survey that was sent to them in December. This years edition was produced with the assistance of the University of Washington. Hopefully you will find it more user friendly. If you have any questions on it, please call the Watch Center. The Surveys are due back by January 23rd.

I hope all of you had a great Holiday season.

Executive Board Update

Northwest HIDTA welcomes the following new appointments to the Executive Board:

Leigh H. Winchell, SAC (Chair)	Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Patrick J. Adams, SAC	Federal Bureau of Investigation
Jeffrey Garrett, Rear Admiral	Coast Guard 13th District
Tim Kimsey, Chief	Port of Seattle Police Department

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Prevention/Treatment Initiative

The Washington State Alcohol/
Drug Information Clearinghouse

This issue of the newsletter features the Washington State Alcohol/Drug Information Clearinghouse, a long-standing and essential NW HIDTA partner agency. The Clearinghouse is actually a department of the 24 Hour Alcohol/Drug Helpline, which is a private non-profit, community-based organization primarily funded by the Washington State Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA). For over five years the Clearinghouse has provided free substance abuse educational information and resources to anyone living or working in Washington in an effort to build drug-free communities, healthier families, and resilient individuals. It is a statewide, free resource, and has become an invaluable partner in producing and disseminating print and electronic materials developed by the NW HIDTA.

The federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) considers the provision of information to be a primary drug prevention strategy and has therefore encouraged the implementation of Resource Centers in almost every state and several foreign countries. These Resource Centers are linked together through the RADAR (Regional Alcohol and Drug Awareness Resources) Network to share knowledge in the drug prevention/information field and to afford easy access to search for specific resources, research and contacts. As the CSAP-designated Washington State Resource Center, the Clearinghouse provides access to:

- Over 1,000 different free resources;
- An on-site research file for more obscure substance abuse information;
- An educational video lending library with over 600 videos;
- A web site with downloadable information (<http://clearinghouse.adhl.org>);
- An e-mail newsletter bulletin titled *Prevention E-Briefs*;
- Referrals to other resources locally, state-wide, regionally, nationally, and internationally in the substance abuse field;
- Exhibit/display resources for community and other health-related events;
- Assistance with developing prevention and parenting curricula;
- A substance abuse publication lending library;
- Assistance with developing substance abuse related national and state campaigns, like Drug Free Washington Month;
- Media advocacy information for substance prevention such as public service announcements and media kits.

At least 60% of the Clearinghouse inventory comes from the NCADI (National Clearinghouse of Alcohol and Drug Infor-

mation), including prevention materials and information for Chemical Dependency professionals. Because this information is free due to the RADAR Network relationship, it can be distributed free within the state. Other inventory is provided by the NW HIDTA, DASA, the Elks Foundation, the NW Kidney Foundation, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Liquor Control Board, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, the Department of Health, the University of Washington, Harvard University of Public Health, King County Public Health, the American Cancer Society, and the American Lung Association. In addition, the Clearinghouse invites individuals and local agencies to produce materials that can be reproduced by the Clearinghouse for distribution around the state. Last year, the Clearinghouse distributed a total of 503,549 items.

The Clearinghouse recently moved to a new, bright and spacious facility located at 6535 5th Place South in Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood. Visitors are welcome, as are email requests, fax requests, phone calls, and mail. Requests are usually filled in about two weeks if all items are in stock. If materials are needed for an exhibit, at least three weeks notice is usually required to assemble the appropriate display. The Clearinghouse can be contacted toll-free at 1.800.662.9111, faxed at 206.760.0589, e-mailed at clearinghouse@adhl.org, and their website can be accessed at <http://clearinghouse.adhl.org>.

For further information about the NW HIDTA Prevention/Treatment Initiative, Steve Freng can be contacted at 206.352.3603 and sfreg@nw.hidta.org.

Public Lands Threat Assessment

Public ownership or administration manages over 48 percent of Washington's total land acreage. The Northwest HIDTA Investigative Support Center (ISC) recently completed a threat assessment of Public Lands in the state to determine the impact of drug related problems to these areas. The assessment discusses these impacts on all the major public lands to include National Forests and Parks; Department of Natural Resource Lands; Native American Reservations; and Military Reservations. Such issues as Meth labs and dumpsites, cannabis cultivation and smuggling on these lands are addressed. If you did not receive a copy of this report and desire one, please contact the Director at (206) 352-3600 or the ISC Operations Manager at (206) 352-3669 to have a copy sent to you.

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

Enforcement Highlights

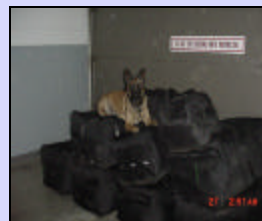
In November 2003, the Thurston County Narcotics Task Force executed two search warrants in the Rochester/Ground Mound area of Southwest Thurston County following a four-month investigation into a multi-county Mexican National Meth group. The leader of the drug trafficking group and 3 other dealers who sold his Meth were arrested. Almost a pound of crystal methamphetamine, \$2000 in cash and two vehicles were seized. The girlfriend of the group leader had laundered a million dollars at a local casino in the last year and a half and was also arrested. This group has been distributing Meth in the Lewis County/Centralia area. One of the suspects arrested had a Lewis County warrant for drug dealing outstanding from a UNET case. The group is believed to have gotten their supply from the Vancouver, WA area. The leader was charged with Leading Organized Crime (RCW 9A.82.060) in state court.

In October 2002, the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Narcotics Task Force initiated an investigation into a criminal conspiracy involving the importation and distribution of heroin. Through a wide range of investigative approaches agents identified a ring of local drug dealers headed by Mexican citizens living in the cities of Longview and Kelso. Drug purchases were made from over 10 different suspects with numerous other suspects assisting in the facilitation of those transactions. In the spring of 2003, members of the Clark-Skamania Narcotics Task Force joined in the investigation. DEA also later joined the investigation. The investigation linked the activities of this group to the east side of the Cascades (Ellensburg) as well as to Tacoma, WA. In October 2003, several search warrants were executed and several arrests were made. One member of this organization was arrested for a drug related homicide and several suspects are still at large.

A long-term investigation by detectives from the Snohomish Regional Narcotics Task Force of a conspiracy to manufacture marijuana began in 2000. The investigation disclosed no legitimate sources of income for several suspects, but all supported lifestyles that suggested otherwise. It was suspected the conspirators were laundering their proceeds in Real Estate and other property. In September 2003, Task Force personnel, with the assistance of Snohomish County Sheriff's deputies, Everett and Marysville police, agents from the DEA and BICE and members of the South County Drug Task Force, served search warrants at multiple residences, financial institutions and one business. Fully operational grows were found at five of the residences inside garages with fabricated false walls out front concealing the rooms. The grows used large custom built filtering systems, which removed virtually all marijuana smell from the vented air. One grow also diverted power by taping into live underground conduits by drilling through the concrete foundation and erecting electrical control panels built into compartments contained behind a false wall constructed in an interior bedroom. Six suspects were arrested and 1,750 high-quality marijuana plants valued at 1.7 million dollars were seized. Additional seizures included \$200,000 in cash and 19 vehicles. The U.S. Attorneys Office, Western District of Washington, has accepted the case

for prosecution.

In March of 1999, the Eastside Narcotics Task Force began an investigation of what was believed to be a major marijuana distribution organization in the northeast King County area. The Seattle DEA HIDTA Task Force subsequently joined the investigation. The investigation revealed that the organization had been importing large shipments of marijuana from Canada and distributing it in Washington, California, Montana and Denver for the past several years. The organization also distributed cocaine and ecstasy. In May 2003, seven federal search warrants were executed in King County, WA, California and Phoenix, AZ, resulting in the arrests of twelve suspects, the seizure of 105 lbs. of marijuana, 270 grams of cocaine, \$25,000, 3 pieces of real estate and five vehicles. Other agencies/offices assisting included DEA in Sacramento and Denver, BICE in Seattle, Blaine and Lake Tahoe, the King County Sheriff's Department, and the Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond Police Departments.



In September 2003, Washington State Patrol Troopers made a traffic stop on a pickup traveling south on State Route 97. A consent search was obtained and a K-9 was subsequently used to conduct a search of the vehicle. The search resulted in the seizure of 130 lbs. of ephedrine and 440 lbs. of marijuana, believed to have come across the border from Canada. A photo of the seizure with the K-9 is above.

Significant or unique border seizures included one on 9/16/2003 that resulted in 1893 lbs. of marijuana being found in a commercial truckload of 83 drums of frozen raspberries (see photos below) at the Sumas, WA Port of Entry. The marijuana was discovered after drilling into the drums produced a green leafy substance.



In another seizure on 10/08/2003, 98,899 ecstasy pills were found secreted in a compartment in the tail of an aircraft (See photo at right) in Portland, Oregon. The flight had originated in Penticton, BC. The aircraft had been entered as a lookout in August 2003 after the receipt of suspicious activity involving the aircraft at Blaine, WA.



Update

Also on the border during September 2003, the IBET Marine Operation Cobija Norte 2003, made two significant seizures. In one case, a subject was arrested at Henry Island, San Juan County, WA after an attempt to smuggle 275 lbs. of marijuana and 170 lbs. of powdered ephedrine in a 15ft Zodiac inflatable boat.



In another incident, another subject was arrested after an attempt to smuggle \$334,000 U.S. Currency outbound (see photo) via a 21-ft Zodiac rigid hull inflatable boat near Waldron Island, San Juan County, WA.

Another seizure on 9/24/2003, resulted in 2772 lbs., of marijuana being seized from a commercial load of 34 bales of used clothing. When the wire ties of one of the bales was cut and six inches of clothing was removed, cardboard boxes were revealed which contained the marijuana.

In September 2003, the DEA Tacoma and Gray's Harbor Narcotics Task Forces worked together to make an initial undercover buy of methamphetamine that came from Utah. A quantitative analysis of the Meth disclosed a purity level of 95%. Arrangements of a subsequent purchase in October resulted in the seizure of 6.5 lbs. of Meth, seizure of a loaded gun and \$10,000

Threat Assessment Survey

The 2004 Northwest HIDTA Threat Assessment Survey was sent out on December 19, 2003. The requested return date is January 23, 2004. The Survey has been rewritten and reformatted to make it more user friendly. Input from those who completed the last Survey and from professionals with on-line survey experience were both integral to the Survey's improvement. We look forward to your comments on the changes in the Survey. We intend to use the feedback to "product improve" the Survey annually.

CEV Stats

Through November 30, 2003, the total number of Critical Events (CEVs) and Inquiries processed by the Watch Center were 2,078 CEVs and 3,398 Inquiries. This represents a 18% and 3% increase respectively. The Watch Center keeps statistics regarding the primary drug for CEV operations by organization. These numbers can be requested from the Watch Center for those HIDTA agencies preparing new or revised initiatives and strategies.

COBIJA PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON

For several years, law enforcement agencies on the U.S./ Mexico border worked together in a coordinated border enforcement program called "Cobija." The word "cobija" means blanket in Spanish. Through a pre-planned enforcement deployment, the agencies on the southern border "blanket" the region with law enforcement resources. This value of this successful program is spreading across the country and now includes highway interdiction information. Throughout the year participating agencies enter intelligence and interdiction reports into the COBIJA computer system for later analysis. Any law enforcement member may generate event and pattern analysis reports once they are an approved user.

Cobija has applications in Washington State. The Cobija Web Share computer system generates trend and pattern reports. It identifies where to place enforcement resources for maximum results. Operational managers from each agency direct and control their resources. A northern border version has been renamed COBIJA NORTE and will operate in concert with Project North Star. For more information on the COBIJA program, contact the Investigative Support Unit.

2004 TRAINING PROGRAM

The Northwest HIDTA is coordinating the following training programs for the New Year:

- January 12-14th Financial Investigative Techniques, CJTC
- February 2-4th Spanish, CJTC
- February 2-4th Interview and Interrogation, CJTC
- March 15-19th Clandestine laboratory investigations (Fire Academy, North Bend) 40 OSHA certification course
- March 19th Recertification for clandestine laboratory investigators (Fire Academy, North Bend) 8 hour OSHA required annual course
- August 18-20th International Money Laundering, CJTC

Other training courses in the planning stages include Task Force Supervisors course, Methamphetamine workshop and instruction on Raves.

Be sure to watch for more HIDTA sponsored training announcements or check our training partner websites:

Midwest Counterdrug Training Center at www.counterdrugtraining.com

Washington Criminal Justice Training Commission at www.cjtc.state.wa.us

Institute for Intergovernmental Research at www.iir.com

Register early for Northwest HIDTA classes. Contact Sherrie Funston at 206 352 3648 or email at sfunston@nw.hidta.org.