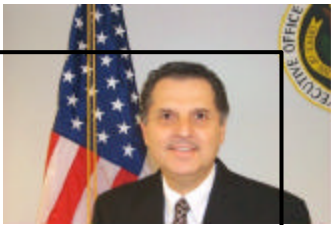


NORTHWEST HIDTA

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

This past quarter we submitted all of our required reports to ONDCP i.e. the Annual Report, Threat Assessment, Initiatives and Budgets for FY 04. Thanks to everyone who participated in the process.

Also, this past quarter we were visited twice by Kurt Schmid the National HIDTA Program Director. The visits were in conjunction with the Project Northstar meeting and the LEIU conference. Kurt was given a tour of the NW HIDTA as well as a briefing on our issues and successes. Kurt also advised us as well as the other conference attendees, of the revised mission statement of the National HIDTA program. "The mission of the

HIDTA program is to reduce drug availability by creating intelligence driven drug task forces aimed at eliminating or reducing domestic drug trafficking and its harmful consequences through enhancing and helping to coordinate drug trafficking control efforts among federal, state and local law enforcement agencies."

The HIDTA program has also increased its emphasis on money laundering and financial crimes as well as CPOT and RPOT investigations. The reauthorization bill for ONDCP and the HIDTA program to continue for the next five years is currently being reviewed by a number of congressional subcommittees. The subcommittee that appropriates funds for ONDCP and the HIDTA program has changed and is now the Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury and General Government. We had the opportunity of briefing key staff members from both the Senate and the House during their visit to Seattle.

**NW HIDTA
Email Addresses
To Change**

The National HIDTA Program has been working for nearly three years to adopt a secure, encrypted email system that would enable the transmission of Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) data over the RISS.net. The intent is to connect all HIDTA intelligence centers, administrative offices and HIDTA task forces on this national network. The Northwest HIDTA has now completed connecting all staff members in the Investigative Support Unit and will work towards completing connections with all initiatives in the upcoming weeks. Each HIDTA email address will change to having a suffix of "@nw.hidta.net." HIDTA staff members will soon notify all of their contacts to switch over to the new address.

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Update



This edition of the NW HIDTA Newsletter affords an opportunity to highlight one of the substance abuse prevention projects identified in our most recent

issue. Selected by the Prevention/Treatment Advisory Committee as one of five new partner agencies to receive 2003 funding, the Spokane County Meth Action Team, organized under the auspices of the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council (GSSAC), had already achieved successes in addressing the issues and impacts of methamphetamine production and use in Eastern Washington. Among those achievements has been the introduction of the *Washington Meth Watch Program*.

The Spokane County Meth Action Team and the GSSAC had felt an urgent need for some time to increase efforts to curtail meth lab activity by making it more difficult to purchase precursor ingredients needed to produce the drug. In researching efforts and campaigns developed in other communities around the country, they found a program designed by the Kansas Department of Health, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and a team of Kansas retailers. This collaboration generously agreed to share their strategy and materials, resulting in the recent implementation of the *Washington Meth Watch Program* in Spokane County and Eastern Washington, specifically focused on retail businesses that carry meth precursors in their inventories.

The Retailer *Meth Watch* program involves:

- Employee and management training available through *Meth Watch* education and awareness presentations;
- Signage which includes door decals, cash register and pharmacy stickers, posters and public information;
- Close collaboration with local law enforcement agencies and the NW HIDTA.

Retailers understand that increased employee awareness can provide their establishments with the resources to be responsible stewards and to assist in the effort to reduce crime and drug use. *Meth Watch* supports an ac-

tive exchange of information with law enforcement agencies, is intended to reduce the incidence of crime in stores and will enhance a sense of safety for customers.

At their May kick-off for the program, retailers including Safeway, Albertson's, Fred Meyer, Pinkerton Security, Rite Aid, Rosauer's, Tidyman's and Yoke's Foods were identified as pilot sites for the *Meth Watch* program. In partnership with the NW HIDTA, efforts will continue to broaden participation in the Retailers program and to disseminate it more widely throughout Eastern and Western Washington. Plans are also underway to develop a companion educational presentation for the general public under the *Washington Meth Watch Program* logo that will be available throughout the NW HIDTA region and the rest of the State this Fall.

For information about becoming a partner in the *Washington Retailer Meth Watch Program*, please contact the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council at 509.922.8383 or www.gssacpreventioncenter.com. For further information about the NW HIDTA Prevention/Treatment initiative, Steve Freng can be contacted at 206.352.3603 and sfreg@nw.hidta.org.

Technical Equipment

The Northwest HIDTA maintains approximately \$500,000 in law enforcement related technical equipment that is available to loan out to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in the fourteen HIDTA counties. It is required that the equipment be used in criminal investigations where there is a drug nexus. This program includes the lending, installation, technical support, and training of law enforcement personnel in the use of electronic surveillance equipment to enhance and improve surveillance capabilities. In some instances, electronic surveillance gives the law enforcement agencies a stand off and/or a 24-hour surveillance capability without having to place personnel on the target of investigation. This can save unnecessary overtime and also avoid compromising the investigation.

The available equipment includes covert video and cov-

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ert audio devices, GPS based tracking systems, direction finders, pager intercepts, and cell phone and landline intercepts for pen registers/trap and traces. The trap and trace is installed by the impacted telephone company to capture incoming calls to the target phone. Copies of court orders are required to loan some of the equipment, i.e., where there is an expectation of privacy. The costs of installation and operational maintenance of a pen registers or a trap and traces will be paid by the requesting agency.

Mr. Pedro Gabriel, the Northwest HIDTA Electronics Technician, is in charge of the loan out program. He also installs and provides technical support for much of the equipment. He can be contacted at (206) 352-3637 or e-mail Pedro at pgabriel@nw.hidta.net.

Enforcement Highlights

In Feb 2003, an Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET) effort led to three arrests and the recovery of diamonds, about \$100,000 in cash and 41 handguns when the suspects were tracked through almost 2 miles of swamps, brush and backyards as they were en route to Canada. On April 26, 2003, BICE Marine Enforcement Officers intercepted 320 lbs. of BC Bud on board a 27-foot cruiser in U.S. waters near the San Juan Islands. On May 13, an inspection of a truck full of baled wood shavings coming from Can-



Baled Wood Shavings 1



107 Bags of Marijuana 2

ada and destined for Los Angeles revealed that the pallets were stacked to allow a hollow center in the trailer. (photo 1) There were 107 clear plastic vacuum-sealed bags of marijuana weighing 1,306 lbs. with an estimated street value of 4-7 million dollars discovered (photo 2).

In other border activity, on May 27, 2003, two suspects from Canada entered the U.S. at the Blaine border crossing and traveled to Bellingham where they made a rendezvous with a lead target. Approximately 27 bricks of cocaine weighing 29.8 kilograms (photo 3) were transferred from a suspect residing in the U.S. to a vehicle operated by the Canadians. The suspects were subsequently apprehended prior to crossing the border back into Canada with the cocaine. On May 29, 2003, suspects residing in Bellingham hiked across the U.S./Canadian border on a trail on the east of the Cascade Mountain range with 70 lbs. of marijuana in an attempt to evade more intense border security on the west side of the



27 Bricks of Cocaine 3

mountains. Though not inclusive of all drug related intercepts at the border, these cases are indicative of the continued trafficking patterns of BC Bud coming south to high valued markets in California and other parts of the U.S., and cocaine, cash and weapons moving north into Canada. They demonstrate the varied modes and methods used by traffickers to avoid detection and arrest.

On March 28, 2003, the DEA Tacoma Drug Task Force with the assistance of the Washington State Patrol arrested a suspect in possession of 2.6 lbs. of crystal meth traveling northbound on I-5 in Lewis County. The investigation started with a controlled purchase in Federal Way, WA, and included the execution of a search warrant in Portland, Oregon, resulting in the seizure of non-operational meth and pseudo extraction labs, 6.5 lbs. of crystal meth, hundreds of empty cases of pseudo and over \$165,000 in cash. In another case, the DEA Tacoma Drug Task Force and the Unified Narcotics Task Force combined efforts resulted in the undercover purchases of meth in a Centralia Tavern and Mini-Mart. On April 10, 2003, a delivery of 2.5 lbs. of meth took place at the Mini-Mart. Following the arrests, search warrants were executed on residences used by the suspects and subsequent seizures included 1.5 lbs. of meth, 2 ounces of crystal meth, 1 ounce of cocaine and a semi-automatic pistol.

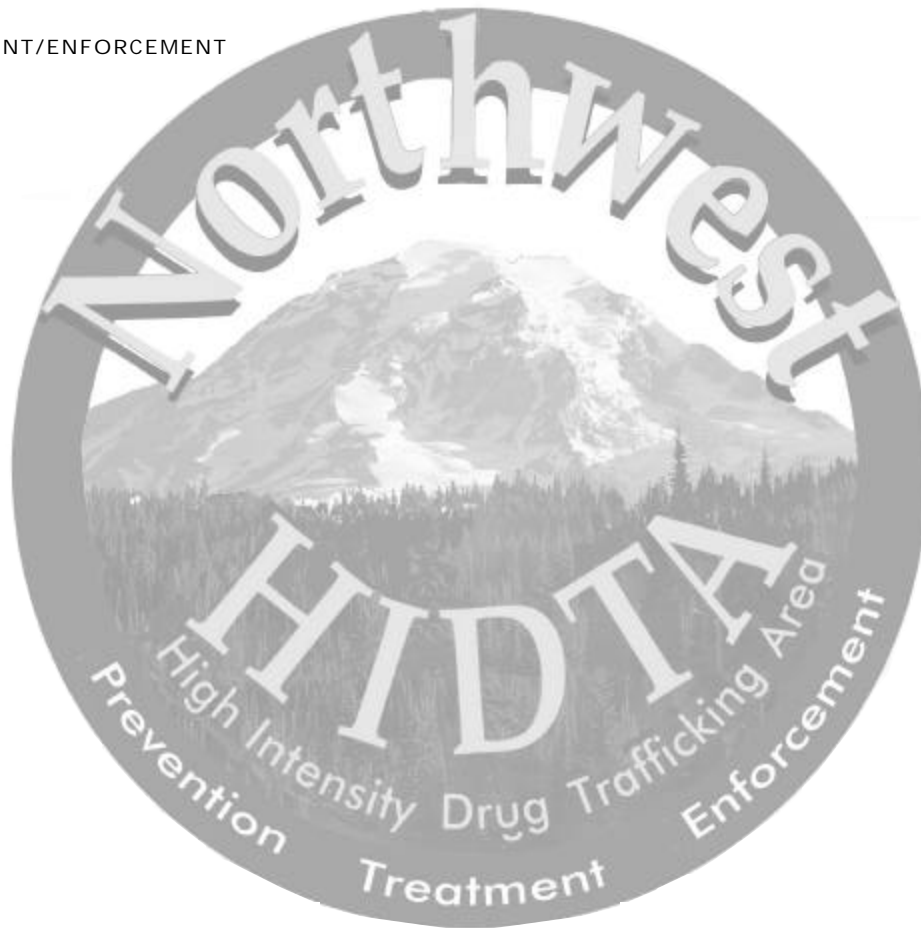
In March 2003, the Skagit County Interlocal Drug Enforcement Unit and DEA arrested four suspects and seized \$60,000 and 8.8 lbs. of meth in an investigation based in Skagit County. This seizure is double the meth seized in the county last year.

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PREVENTION/TREATMENT/ENFORCEMENT



Update

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In March 2003, the Thurston County Narcotics Task Force made nine arrests and seized over 5000 tablets of Ecstasy in a 6-month investigation into a criminal group with ties to another Drug Trafficking Organization operating in the Seattle area. As of June 2, 2003, eight of the suspects had been convicted with the main target facing a possible 12-year sentence.

On May 1, 2003, the HIDTA Transportation Group seized one kilogram of cocaine discovered during the body search of a passenger flying from Seattle to Alaska. The suspect passenger initially claimed the bag contained urine. In another case initiated in April 2003, it was learned a skycap was facilitating the movement of drugs at the airport. The skycap would receive bags containing from 2 to 10 lbs. of marijuana from another suspect who would drive up to the check in counter at the

airport. He would then print up an extra luggage tag to be included with the legitimate baggage of unsuspecting passengers traveling on flights to Alaska, California and Arizona. Other conspirators would then pick up the extra bags at the destination cities. The skycap said he was involved in this process from 2 to 4 times a month for a year prior to being arrested.

In May 2003, a farm service retail outlet provided the LEAD Task Force in Yakima with information concerning the sale of five pounds MSM (frequently used as a cutting agent for meth). A couple of days later WSP stopped a vehicle and arrested the occupants with six lbs. of meth. WSP connected the arrest of one of the suspects with the recorded sale of MSM, which could become an important factor in subsequent legal proceedings.