



METRICH Enforcement Unit

Information Bulletin

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23 Years Serving North Central Ohio Communities

Inside this issue:

Pilot of pot plane pleads guilty	2
Multi-Agency Police Saturation a success Marion County	2
Haylee's grandma busted for drug dealing Richland County	3
Marijuana plants seized Knox County	4
Grant allows detective to fight pharmaceutical misuse Richland County	4
Man found with heroin, cocaine after M'ville stop Huron County	5
Search warrant executed at the Inferno Gentleman's Club Crawford County	5
METRICH agents are 'second-chance heroes' Seneca County	6
Regional Statistics	7

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METRICH DRUG UNIT

CONDUCTS UNDERCOVER DRUG "STING" OPERATION

Seneca County

On Tuesday, August 11, 2009, the Seneca County Drug Task Force-METRICH Enforcement Unit, consisting of the Tiffin Police Department, Seneca County Sheriff's Office, Fostoria Police Department and the Seneca County Prosecutor's Office, along with additional officers from the Tiffin Police Department, Fostoria Police Department and Zero Tolerance (Bicounty) Task Force executed a drug related search warrant in Tiffin, Ohio, after conducting a drug related "sting" operation on individuals who were transporting heroin from Columbus, Ohio to Tiffin.

The search warrant was executed after conducting a traffic stop on a 1998 Chevy Monte Carlo, bearing Ohio temporary tag - #R0181904, being owned by a Seth D. Hoover. The search warrant was signed by Judge Mark Repp of the City of Tiffin Municipal Court which unveiled 90 (ninety) balloons of suspected heroin, heroin abuse drug paraphernalia and criminal tools from the vehicle.

Seth Hoover, 24 years old, was charged with Possession of Heroin, a felony of the third degree and Seth Carter, 22 years old, was charged with Driving Under Suspension, a misdemeanor driving offense. Additional charges of Possession of Heroin, Per-



The METRICH Enforcement Unit continues to significantly increase heroin removals throughout the region.

mitting Felony Drug Abuse, Complicity of Possession of Heroin, Driving Under Suspension, Possession of Drug Abuse Instruments and Possession of Criminal Tools, are pending in relation to the heroin investigation due to agents waiting for lab results on the substances that were recovered from the investigation.

"We have seen a recent surge of illegal trafficking and abuse in heroin in the METRICH Enforcement region and this is just a beginning step of addressing this issue in Seneca County and to send a message to the drug traffickers not only in Tiffin but in Columbus, Ohio, as well, that their business will not be tolerated here", Agent/Detective Charles W. Boyer said.

See Heroin search warrant, page 7

Pilot of pot plane pleads guilty to drug charge; may get 3 years

Huron County

The pilot who jettisoned about 20 pounds of marijuana from his plane near the Willard area earlier this year pleaded guilty yesterday to drug charges.

Ryan Carter Thomas, 48, of Albuquerque, N. M., owner of the 1963 Mooney fixed wing single-engine plane and his passenger, Greg Baca, also of New Mexico, were arrested on June 17 after the plane landed at the Huron County Airport, in Norwalk Township off US 20.

Thomas pleaded guilty to possession of marijuana and will likely receive a three-year prison sentence, Huron County Prosecutor Russ Leffler said.

Both the state and the defense attorney agreed on the length of the prison term, Leffler said.

"We're glad to have one of them down," Leffler said of yesterday's plea hearing.

Baca is set to go on trial Thursday, Leffler said.

"(Baca) denies he knew anything, so we're going to trial. It will be fun," Leffler said.

The plane is valued at approximately \$35,000 and was confiscated. The proceeds from the sale will be used for law enforcement by the Huron County Sheriff's Office unless the federal officials who helped in the case obtain it, Leffler and Sheriff Dane Howard said.

Investigators from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Border Patrol and Homeland Security offices assisted in the investigation, according to officials.

Border Patrol agents were on another aircraft that following the plane on June 17 and saw a black duffel bag being tossed off the plane, according to the sheriff's office. Deputies and Willard police officers found the bag that was filled with approximately 20 pounds of marijuana "tightly

compressed" in five bricks, officials have said.

Baca admitted to pitching the bag out of the plane, according to a search warrant drafted by Capt. Robert McLaughlin that was filed in Norwalk Municipal Court during the investigation.

Baca also reportedly told investigators Thomas told him to get rid of the bag, the search warrant stated.

During a search of the plane on June 18, a Toshiba laptop computer, Olympus camera and a Garmin GPS electronic mapping system were confiscated as well as the plane and pot, the search warrant stated.

Investigators know the plane was heading to the Cleveland area but don't know exactly where, officials have said.

Originally published in the Morning Journal on September 5, 2009.

Multi-Agency Police Saturation A Success

Marion County

"Operation Make Some Noise", a Multi-Agency Police Saturation (M.A.P.S.) effort was conducted with representatives from the Marion Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol, Marion Police Department and the Marion County Sheriff's Office from July 23-25, 2009. The final results of the detail are listed below.

TRAFFIC	
Total Arrest (Everything)	198
Seatbelt Arrests	31
OVI's	12
Warnings	199
Defects	70
DUS	19
Felony Arrests	9
Total Traffic Stops	356

CASES	
Other Felony Cases	3
Drug Cases	13
Felony Drug Cases	6
Bolts	2
Assistance to Other Agencies	84
Cases Released to Other Agencies	3
Other Cases	13
Total Cases	25

Haylee's grandma busted for drug dealing

Richland County

Haylee Donathan's grandmother was arrested Tuesday for drug trafficking, a little more than a week before the 4-year-old's custody trial.

Mary Watson, 47, whose last known address was 479 W. Fourth St., was arrested at her place of employment by METRICH Enforcement Unit Detectives Perry Wheeler and Steve Blust.

"She didn't say anything," Wheeler said. "She asked if she could smoke a cigarette, that's it."

Haylee has been in foster care since late July, when she returned to Ohio from San Diego. She, her mother and her mother's sex offender boyfriend were the subjects of a month-long manhunt that drew national headlines.

Richland County Juvenile Court Judge Ron Spon, who granted custody to Children Services, has set a trial for Sept. 10. The judge must decide if Haylee is dependent, neglected or abused, as Children Services alleges. If the county agency prevails, Spon will decide whether or not Haylee remains in foster care.

Watson, Haylee's mother Candace Watson and at least one other relative have submitted claims seeking custody.

In June, Mary Watson was granted temporary emergency custody in domestic relations court. Spon awarded custody of Haylee to Children Services in

July, saying juvenile court supersedes domestic relations court.

The Richland County agency had conferred with its San Diego counterparts.

Children Services filed a complaint against Haylee's mother, father and grandmother. Attorneys for Candace Watson, James Donathan and Mary Watson denied the claims.

When Children Services took custody of Haylee, officials requested there be no contact between Haylee and her grandmother. The two had been talking three or four times a day by phone. Spon did order supervised visits for Mary Watson.

"The concerns of the (San Diego) agency have basis in fact," Spon said at a July 23 hearing.

METRICH handled the investigation of Mary Watson. Commander Lt. Dino Sgambellone declined to say what type of drug the grandmother was allegedly selling and deferred further comment to Sheriff Steve Sheldon.

"We knew that there were issues," Sheldon said. "They (METRICH officials) thought it was something that should be brought out before (the custody trial), just to give the court the advantage of full knowledge of it."

Haylee's welfare has been a concern since late May when her mother allegedly ran off with convicted sex offender Robbi Potter. Potter, with convictions for two counts of sexual battery

involving 7- and 9- year-old victims, reportedly walked away from the local Volunteers of America halfway house.

Candace Watson, 25, who has no listed address but lived in Crestline before the incident, is accused of complicity to escape. Authorities believe she provided Potter with transportation.

The manhunt ended June 23 with the couple's arrest in San Diego. Watson also was charged with harboring a federal fugitive.

Potter, 27, faces even more serious charges. Last month, he was indicted through the Adam Walsh Act on the recommendation of U.S. Marshals. The federal government can intervene when a sex offender crosses state lines.

In addition, Potter faces charges of escape and failure to notify of change of address, as well as probation and parole violations.

Donathan, 27, of 270 N. Main St., Apt. 14, also was charged with complicity to escape. Haylee's father is accused of procuring a telephone for Potter and acting as a lookout for the vehicle that was to help him escape.

Sheldon said he felt for Haylee's grandmother — to a degree.

"It's an unfortunate thing for Mary Watson, but obviously we still want what's best for Haylee," the sheriff said.

Originally published in the News Journal on September 2, 2009.

Marijuana plants seized

Knox County

For the second time in less than a week, a large quantity of marijuana plants has been seized by the Knox County Sheriff's Office.

According to Knox County Sheriff David Barber, detectives, assisted by the Fredericktown Police Department and an Ohio State Highway Patrol pilot, seized 40 large plants off Zolman Road, just north of Fredericktown, Monday afternoon.

Sheriff's detectives received information on the possible location on the marijuana patch and enlisted the assistance of an airplane and pilot from the state patrol to check the area, which led to Monday's discovery.

A second group of plants was also located by the highway patrol Monday off Sockman Road. Over a dozen plants were seized from this location.

No arrests have been made in

regard to these discoveries. Barber estimates the two crops to have a street value of over \$150,000.

"We are continuing to take the profit out of someone's criminal enterprise," Barber said.

The Knox County Sheriff's Office and the Ohio State Highway Patrol are active members of the METRICH Enforcement Unit.

Originally published in the Mount Vernon News on August 11, 2009

Grant allows detective to fight pharmaceutical misuse

Richland County

City police Detective Darrin Remaley handled fraud investigations for 10 years. His new role will find him following a different kind of paper trail.

Remaley, 42, is the pharmaceutical investigator for the METRICH Enforcement Unit. A \$27,000 grant from the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators is paying for the new position.

"We sought funding to increase our investigative capacity, not only for pharmaceutical diversion at the abuse level but also for health care professionals," METRICH Commander Lt. Dino Sgambellone said. "Those can be lengthy investigations requiring significant resources.

"We've seen the abuse of phar-

maceuticals rise exponentially over the last several years, especially narcotic pharmaceuticals. It allows us to devote a full-time investigator, which is required given the scope of the problem."

Dawn Brown handled most of METRICH's pharmaceutical cases, but she couldn't devote all her energy to it.

Remaley joined the department in 1991. After nearly a decade in the detective bureau, he spent the last few months on patrol because of department layoffs.

"It was nice to go back for a short time," Remaley said. "It was a change, a refresher in patrol."

Still, Remaley welcomes the chance to return to a desk job.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge of this job; it interests

me," he said. "Prescription drugs are a big problem."

Remaley said he has heard about the extent of the problem through his wife, a nurse.

"Darrin brings extensive investigative experience to the unit," Sgambellone said. "He has shown the ability to successfully investigate complex cases."

The grant will fund the position at least through the end of the year. "I would hope we would retain the position beyond the scope of the grant," Sgambellone said. "Darrin is budgeted, anyway. It's just a matter of where the chief (Phil Messer) feels we need to use our resources."

Originally published in the News Journal on September 8, 2009.

Man found with heroin, cocaine after M'ville traffic stop

Huron County

A Norwalk man who has served prison time for selling drugs was arrested Thursday when investigators found him with heroin balloons and a small amount of cocaine.

Jeremy M. Sax, 29, of 38 Newton St., was taken into custody after a Peru Center Road traffic stop about 9 p.m. one mile south of Monroeville. He was charged with possession of heroin and possession of cocaine.

Huron County Sheriff's Capt. Bob McLaughlin, in a prepared statement, said Sax is accused of purchasing the drugs from "Hispanic heroin traffickers" in Columbus. McLaughlin said authorities turned over information about the suspected transaction to the Columbus Police Department narcotics unit.

"The driver of the vehicle was

searched, questioned and released," he said.

Norwalk Police Detective Sgt. Jim Fulton, who removed Sax from the vehicle, and Officer Seth Fry transported Sax to the Norwalk police station.

"He was in possession of at least 20 balloons of heroin and a small amount of cocaine," Fulton wrote in his report.

Thursday's arrest was the result of a two-day, joint investigation by members of METRICH, a 10-county drug task force, Norwalk police and the sheriff's office. Monroeville Police Officer Matthew McPeek also assisted in the traffic stop.

"The only thing I helped so was search the vehicle. The only thing I found was a syringe in the trunk," McPeek said.

McLaughlin said authorities

notified Adult Parole Officer Jim Zappa about Sax's arrest.

On Nov. 2, 2006, Sax was sentenced to four years in prison for burglary. Sax was sentenced Aug. 24, 2007 to 11 months in prison for three counts of trafficking drugs.

"Norwalk police drug officers Sgt. (Todd) Temple, Sgt. Fulton and Officer Seth Fry have additional evidence against Sax, which will be presented to the Huron County grand jury at a later date," McLaughlin said without elaboration.

Sax is currently in custody at the Huron County Jail awaiting a Norwalk Municipal Court bond hearing today.

Originally published in the Norwalk Reflector on July 17, 2009.

Search Warrant Executed at the Enferno Gentleman's Club

Crawford County

Sheriff Ron Shawber reported that officers from the Crawford County Sheriff's Office, Bucyrus Police Department, METRICH Enforcement Unit and the Ohio Investigative Unit – Liquor Control Division, executed a search warrant at The Enferno Gentleman's Club, 934 Lincoln Highway, Bucyrus.

Large quantities of alcohol, \$856.00 cash, a small amount of marijuana and drug paraphernalia, along with items relating to illegal

liquor sales and illegal operation of a sexually oriented business were seized.

Two female dancers at the club, ages 21 and 29, were detained, processed and released pending review of filing charges by the Prosecutor's Office. This was the conclusion of an ongoing investigation by the Sheriff's Office and METRICH.

Charles A. Durham was arrested on five counts of Liquor Permit Required, five counts of

Keeper of Place of Illegal Alcohol is Sold and five counts of Illegally Operating a Sexually Oriented Business. Additional charges are pending review by the Crawford County Prosecutor's Office.

Susan L. Rollison was arrested for Illegal Activity at a Sexually Oriented Business, Solicitation, Possession of Drugs, and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. Rollison also had an active warrant for her arrest from the Mansfield Police Department for Failure to Appear.

METRICH agents are 'second-chance heroes'

Seneca County

I am writing concerning the Seneca County Drug Task Force - METRICH Enforcement Unit or, as I call them, my "second-chance heroes." I was busted by the unit several months ago, and if it wasn't for them, I most likely would be dead.

I was a heavy heroin user but I couldn't see it for myself until they came along. When heroin gets a hold of you, you don't see reality, your whole world becomes heroin.

From the time you wake up till the time you go to sleep, all you want and worry about is, "Where am I going to get my next fix?" Nothing else matters - not a job, not family, not food, not even where you're going to sleep at night - nothing but heroin. Next thing you know you're lost in a world you can't get out of.

The night the members of the METRICH unit talked to me about my drug problem, they wanted to see me go and get help for my heroin addiction.

The reason why I'm writing is because I recently read an article concerning their lack of funds for the city of Fostoria to keep their participation with the METRICH unit. When I read the article, I couldn't believe their funds were in danger, which ultimately means our local streets are in danger.

The METRICH unit and our local law enforcement officers

are our front line in the fight against drugs and drug-related crimes. April 11, 2007, the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services said the Seneca County drug task force METRICH enforcement unit is the most effective law enforcement agency for felony drug convictions in Seneca County. Seneca County is made up of 552 square miles and is the home to more than 14,000 residences with an estimated 58,000 persons. And the Seneca County Drug Task Force - METRICH Enforcement Unit has only one police officer representing the Fostoria Police Department and one police officer representing the Tiffin Police Department along with one officer from the Sheriff's Office.

Dec. 21, 2008, there were only three pending investigations involving heroin abuse and trafficking in Seneca County. As of this date, 75 percent of their investigations are dealing with heroin and prescription drugs, and 90 percent of crimes in Seneca County are drug-related.

Our local police officers are facing extraordinary new challenges with limited resources. I respect the choice of our local police officers to dedicate themselves to serving Fostoria and Seneca County.

I believe we must honor their service by doing everything possible to provide them with the support, resources, training, and

the funding they need to meet the needs of our city.

It is important the people of Fostoria and Seneca County know the other side of what the METRICH unit does. Besides making the drug cases and making the arrests, you need to know the unit is eliminating the drug problem of Fostoria and Seneca County, but they are wanting to get the drug users off the drugs and that is really eliminating the drug problem of our community.

I believe the citizens of Fostoria and Tiffin need to do everything we can to see that our police departments get the funding they need to keep our local silent heroes patrolling the streets.

Contact Fostoria Mayor John Davoli and the Seneca County Sheriff's Office and let them know you want to keep the streets of Fostoria and Tiffin safe. Let them know you want to see the police department gets the funding it needs to keep their participation with the Seneca County drug task force METRICH enforcement unit. Thank you to my three heroes who pulled me out of my life of death and gave me my life back.

My linda Shadle

Originally published in the Advertiser Tribune on September 24, 2009.

Heroin search warrant, from page 1

“Heroin addiction is a devastating drug, not only to the people who abuse heroin but to the community it plagues. The execution of this search warrant is just a small example of what area Law Enforcement plans on doing to

combat the heroin issue in our community”, Agent/Sergeant Donald R. Joseph said.

“This investigation has a direct nexus between the increasing heroin abuse throughout Seneca County, including the City of

Fostoria and City of Tiffin. We have linked Hoover to several locations in Fostoria and Tiffin and continuing to investigate the remaining offenders”, Detective/Agent Matt Armstrong said.

METRICH Regional Statistics

METRICH Regional 1 - 2nd QTR Statistical Summary	Jan-Jun	Jan-Jun	08-09
	2008	2009	Change %
CASE ACTIVITY			
Total New Cases	568	829	46.0%
Closed Cases	399	539	35.1%
Open Pharmaceutical Cases	75	254	238.7%
Drug-Related Arrests	264	311	17.8%
Non-Drug-Related Arrests	31	17	-45.2%
Search Warrants	95	94	-1.1%
Demand Reduction - Public Appearances	34	43	26.5%
Intel Submissions	1860	2061	10.8%
DRUG REMOVALS			
Cocaine (g)	1883.74	336.72	-82.1%
Crack (g)	505.9	399.41	-21.0%
Ecstasy (du)	225	524	132.9%
Heroin (g)	341.65	308.62	-9.7%
LSD (du)	23	0	-100.0%
Marijuana (g)	12944.44	37759.22	191.7%
Marijuana Plants (#)	2225	479	-78.5%
Other Drugs (g)	252.39	21	-91.7%
Psilocybin Mushrooms (#)	94	213	126.6%
PHARMACEUTICAL REMOVALS			
Diluadid (du)	0	6	600.0%
Hydrocodone (du)	135	255	88.9%
Methadone (du)	1	301	30000.0%
Oxycodone (du)	221	1,194	440.3%
Other Pharmaceuticals (du)	654	690	5.5%
ASSETS SEIZED			
Weapons	29	37	27.6%
Currency	\$108,933.78	\$40,519.73	-62.8%
Vehicles	\$85,310.00	\$88,900.00	4.2%

23 Years Serving North Central Ohio Communities

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METRICH (Metro-Richland County) Enforcement Unit is a ten county law enforcement task force created to address multi-jurisdictional violators of Ohio's drug, weapons, and organized crime statutes. The project operates with a basic "Community Policing Philosophy" using a "Weed and Seed Strategy" from ten "de-centralized" offices.

Participating agencies: Ashland, Crawford, Hancock, Huron, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Richland, Seneca, Wyandot County Sheriff's Offices and Prosecutors Offices; Ashland, Loudonville, Bucyrus, Crestline, Galion, Findlay, Bellevue, Greenwich, Monroeville, New London, Norwalk, Plymouth, Wakeman, Willard, Mt. Vernon, Marion, Mt. Gilead, Lexington, Mansfield, Ontario, Shelby, Fostoria, Tiffin, Carey, Upper Sandusky Police Departments; Ohio State Highway Patrol; Ohio Department of Public Safety; BCI&I, Ohio State Board of Pharmacy; U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development; FBI; ATF; DEA; IRS.

Points of Contact

Ashland County

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Hancock County

Det Tom Blunk, Access Officer (419) 424-7887

Huron County

Capt Robert McLaughlin, Access Officer (419) 663-2820

Knox County

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