



METRICH Enforcement Unit

Information Bulletin

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24 Years Serving North Central Ohio Communities

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Medication Take Back Day *Regional*

Residents in the METRICH region turned in 925 pounds of expired, unused or unwanted medication as part of the nationwide Drug Enforcement Agency Medication Take Back Day, according to Mansfield police Lt. Dino Sgambellone of METRICH. State-wide, a total of 14,501 pounds was collected.

Law enforcement agencies in Richland County and METRICH agencies in Ashland, Crawford, Huron, Marion and Wyandot counties hosted the event jointly with MedCentral Health System.

“As the whole heroin issue goes, a lot of the genesis of the problem starts with people using prescription drugs. They’re prescribed legally and didn’t get used. We all took a look at our own cabinets and saw what over-the-counter and prescription drugs we can get rid of,” Jody Demo-Hodgins, executive director of the ADAMH Board.

Law enforcement officers are working with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency to properly dispose of collected medications. A METRICH news release indicates federal and state laws mandate the proper destruction of medications, as flushing them down toilets can pollute drinking water and have damaging effects on the



Drug Enforcement Agency Medication Take Back Day collected unused and unwanted medications Saturday. 14,501 pounds were collected statewide.

environment.

The United States Geological Society conducted a study of more than 130 rivers, streams and other waterways in the U.S. and found pharmaceuticals in more than 80 percent of those tested -- including antibiotics, anti-depressants, birth control pills, pain killers, tranquilizers, seizure medications and cancer treatment medications.

Lt. Sgambellone said, “The success of this event highlights the effectiveness of the METRICH collaboration with the Citizens we serve. We hope to have future collections throughout the region.”

Originally published in the News Journal and the Marion Star on September 26, 2010 and August 23, 2010.

Three people arrested in Findlay drug bust

Hancock County

Three Findlay residents were arrested on felony drug possession charges following a bust Thursday morning at 524 E. Sandusky St.

Charles E. Davis Jr., 29, Tamika T. Thomas, 37, and Deonte J. Tarver, 19, were all charged with possession of crack cocaine, a third-degree felony, following an investigation by the

Hancock County METRICH Drug Enforcement Unit.

Additional charges are pending and the case remains under investigation, according to Findlay police Detective Sgt. Justin Hendren.

After obtaining a search warrant from Findlay Municipal Court, the Findlay Police Department Emergency Response Team

executed the warrant at the upstairs apartment just before 6 a.m. Thursday, Hendren said.

Officers seized crack cocaine, marijuana, drug paraphernalia, prescription drugs and cash, Hendren said.

The trio was taken to the Hancock County jail, he said.

Originally published in The Courier on August 20, 2010.

Heroin Search Warrants Executed

Ashland County

On August 18, 2010, Ashland City Police Detectives, Patrol Officers along with the Ashland Special Response Team which is comprised of Ashland City, Ashland County, Loudonville Officers and two tactical medics, executed two residential search warrants. The warrants are related to an ongoing heroin trafficking investigation funded by the MET-

RICH Drug Task Force.

The first warrant was executed at 8:23 am at 322 E. 10th St. Ashland Ohio and the second warrant was executed 8:38 am at 332 Vine St. Ashland Ohio.

Evidence seized includes: heroin, drug abuse instruments, drug paraphernalia, and items related to drug trafficking.

The following people were

arrested stemming from the search warrant: Nathan Brown age 20, Zachary Kerr age 22, Amber Marker age 21, Bobby Bailey age 32, Timothy Workman age 27 for various offenses ranging from misdemeanor permitting drug abuse to felony drug trafficking.

The investigation is still ongoing and other associates are likely to be arrested in the future.

Joint law effort leads to more than 100 citations

Marion County

A two-day partnership between the police and the patrol netted 305 traffic stops, seven warrant arrests and two felony arrests, according to a press release.

The Marion post of the Ohio Highway Patrol, aided by troopers from other posts, the Marion City Police Department, MAR-MET/METRICH and the Marion County Adult Probation Department collaborated for Operation Safe Streets, a multi-agency police saturation.

The effort led to one search warrant, served Tuesday night and returning four handguns, several grams of cocaine and crack cocaine, and more than 100 narcotic pills.

Other efforts discovered a missing juvenile from Kentucky, provided assistance to an elderly woman with medical problems on the west side of the city, and arrested a driver for driving under the influence of prescription pills with a 4-year-old in his vehicle.

In total, there were 122 traffic

citations issued, with 58 of them for seat belt violations. There was one person arrested for drunken driving.

Another 165 warnings were issued.

There were eight drug cases investigated, and officers collected 4 grams of marijuana, 170 grams of cocaine, 160 grams of crack cocaine, 144 pills, \$886 in suspected drug money, and four handguns.

Originally published in the Marion Star on July 16, 2010.

Willard man busted with \$600 worth of heroin

Huron County

A Willard man accused of having about 56 doses of heroin is scheduled to have a preliminary hearing Thursday in Norwalk Municipal Court.

If defendant Joseph J. Fusko III, 39, of 3258 Austin Drive, waives his rights to the hearing, his case likely will be transferred to Huron County Commons Pleas Court for a possible grand jury indictment. He has been unable to post a \$10,000 bond since being arrested during a July 26 traffic stop on Neal Zick Road west of Ohio 598 as part of an investigation by METRICH, a 10-county drug task force.

Willard Police Detective Adam Strong received a tip about 3 p.m. that day that Fusko would be receiving a large amount of heroin in Richland County, Huron

County Sheriff's Captain Bob McLaughlin said. The traffic stop and arrest happened about 6:15 p.m.

"We had a vehicle to look for. I previously had seen him in the same pickup truck," McLaughlin said.

Fusko reportedly was heading north on Ohio 61 slightly south of U.S. 224 at the time.

Sheriff's Deputy Josh Querin and Lt. Annette McLaughlin stopped Fusko. During the traffic stop, Querin used police dog, Bea, who indicated there was an illegal substance in the truck.

"(Querin) found the substance inside the cab," said Bob McLaughlin, who added that Columbus drug dealer typically sell seven balloons, or doses, of heroin for \$100. "(Fusko) said he

had \$600 in the transaction."

Fusko, who remains in custody at the Huron County Jail, was arrested without incident. He was charged with possession of heroin. A female occupant was questioned and released.

McLaughlin, the Huron County contact for METRICH, commended Strong for going a good job passing along a tip.

Chief Joe Daniel said his department's goal is to tackle the drug problem in the Willard community and surrounding townships.

"Anytime we can get someone off the street in connection with an alleged drug offense, that's our goal," he said.

Originally published in the Norwalk Reflector on August 4, 2010.

Tiro man charged with heroin trafficking

Crawford County

A Tiro man was arraigned in Crawford County Municipal Court in Galion on Tuesday on one charge of trafficking in heroin, a fourth-degree felony.

Adam E. Cole, 22, 207 Water St., Tiro, plead not guilty to the charge and Municipal Court Judge Sean Leuthold appointed attorney Robert Whitney, of Mansfield, to represent him. His bond was set at \$50,000.

Cole was arrested in the 300 block of South Sandusky Avenue on Friday by officers from the

Bucyrus, Willard and Galion Police departments along with deputies from the Crawford County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Ron Shawber says the arrest was the result of several weeks worth of work by all the agencies in conjunction with the METRICH Drug Task Force.

"These type of arrests take time, money and manpower," Shawber said. "We would like to do more investigative work, but we are still down nine deputies. I may be able to hire some next

year, but we need to look at the money situation."

A preliminary court date for Cole will be set this week. His case could also be bound over to the September session of the Crawford County Grand Jury.

Originally published in the Bucyrus Telegraph Forum on September 1, 2010.

Marijuana-like drug hits region

Marion County

A potentially dangerous marijuana-like substance is turning up in north central Ohio.

The effects of JWH-018 - named for organic chemist John W. Huffman but known better as "Spice" or "K2" - are similar to marijuana and include anxiety, nausea, hallucinations, paranoia and rapid heartbeat.



K2 products has been associated with hospitalizations in Missouri, Kansas, Florida, and Maine.

Experts say K2 should not be taken with alcohol. With a glass of wine, smoking the blend may cause severe headaches that can last several hours and reportedly are worse than any hangover, according to the drug and health testing website TestCountry.org.

"It's important that people know about it," METRICH (Richland County) Commander Lt. Dino Sgambellone said. "It's not illegal because it hasn't been addressed by the Legislature yet, but that doesn't mean it's not dangerous."

K2 is being marketed as an incense with the disclaimer "not for human consumption" on the packaging. In 2008 and 2009, it

and another synthetic cannabinoid were detected in various herbal smoking blends across Europe. The blends, which go by such nicknames as "Yucatan Fire," "Skunk," "Forest Humus" and "Scope," sent people to hospitals in Germany.

Mansfield police crime lab director Tony Tambasco recently identified K2, in the form of a white powder, for the first time in the immediate area. The sample came from Huron County.

Maj. Aaron Corwin, with the MARMET Drug Task Force in Marion County, said authorities here haven't come across the drug, yet, but "that's not saying it's not here."

Authorities in Richland and Crawford counties also say K2 has not turned up. But it has made an impact in Knox County.

"We've had at least four students pass out," said state Rep. Margaret Ruhl, R-Mount Vernon. "It's a growing problem."

Ruhl said three of the students passed out during class at Mount Vernon High School in May. The fourth student was at a concert.

Even though JWH-018 hasn't been designated as a controlled substance, it hasn't escaped the attention of the Knox County Prosecutor's Office.

"We've been charging people with abusing harmful intoxicants," Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Springer said. "We're taking it very seriously."

The charge is a first-degree

misdemeanor.

Ruhl is doing her part to make the substance one that's legally controlled. She is co-sponsor of House Bill 544, which would prohibit the possession and trafficking of K2 and provide that if the drug is involved in a violation of the offense of corrupting another with drugs, the penalty would be the same as if marijuana were involved.

"We need to get it moving and not wait until something worse than passing out happens," Ruhl said.

Shelby police Chief Charlie Roub said he is not looking forward to dealing with another dangerous drug.

"I hope it stays away from here," he said. "Mansfield tends to get things before we do. Sooner or later, it will make its way around, just like everything else."

Bucyrus police Chief Ken Teets wasn't looking forward to another challenge.

"We're still getting beat up with regular marijuana," he said.

Corwin said searches in Marion County uncovered two marijuana growing spots.

"We pulled close to 50 marijuana plants (Thursday) just in our county," he said, of the locations found in fields on the north and on the east. "No arrests, but we have some leads and we're still working on those leads."

Originally published in the Marion Star on August 22, 2010.

\$14,000 seized from traffic stop

Huron County

The Huron County Sheriff's Office seized almost \$14,000, a small amount of marijuana and a cell phone during a traffic stop Friday afternoon.

Former Sandusky resident, Earl Grandberry Jr., 27, of Columbus, was charged with tampering with evidence and possession of an Oxycontin pill in connection with the incident about 4:30 p.m. He currently is in custody at the Huron County Jail.

The suspect said he obtained the \$13,805 from "a painting gig down in West Virginia," Capt. Bob McLaughlin said. He also said investigators will be contacting a Columbus area rental agency because the car Grandberry was driving was supposed to be turned in five or six

days ago.

The drug investigator was asked how plausible Grandberry's story was about the money and McLaughlin said given that Grandberry has a criminal history related to drug trafficking, is accused of a similar incident in Gahanna in September and reportedly was involved in a Mansfield investigation by METRICH (a 10-county drug task force), he said "we suspect the money was for something else besides painting."

In Erie County, Grandberry earlier was sentenced to up to six months in a community based corrections facility – a form of prison which focuses on education and substance abuse treatment – for possession of mari-

juana, McLaughlin said.

Sheriff Dane Howard praised the work of Deputy Joshua Querin, who stopped Grandberry for a traffic violation Friday and searched the vehicle with his police dog. Querin has been leading one of the two county canine units for less than a year.

"Josh is doing a heckuva job...I'm proud of his work. He and his dog make quite a team that is quite effective," Howard said.

The sheriff noted that Querin has been involved in "dozens of dozens" of felony and misdemeanor drug seizures in the last year.

Originally published in the Norwalk Reflector on August 21, 2010.

METRICH Drug Unit, along with area law enforcement make drug arrests

Seneca County

On Monday, August 02 2010, the Seneca County Drug Task Force-METRICH Enforcement Unit, ended several drug investigations involving prescription drugs, heroin, crack cocaine, cocaine and marihuana.

A total of twenty-four people from Seneca County, Fostoria and the Tiffin area wanted on forty-five felony drug-related charges were indicted last week by the Seneca County Grand Jury.

According to the Seneca County Drug Task Force there were twelve total suspects arrested with twelve remaining at

large and who are presently considered to be wanted felons.

"This operation is an example of what can be accomplished when law enforcement agencies cooperate together and pool their resources", Officer Matt Armstrong stated.

"The Task Force is currently down one full-time agent due to economic shortfalls in the City of Fostoria. The same economic concerns continue to plague area law enforcement throughout the METRICH unit's region. We are anxiously anticipating the return of a full-time agent so we can

continue to timely address citizen complaints in the City of Fostoria", Det. Charles W. Boyer said.

"This long term investigation was the result of the tireless efforts of task force agents that are dedicated to disrupting the flow of illegal drugs and illegal sale of prescription drugs within the community. We will diligently seek out those that remain at large and insure that they are brought to justice.", Sgt./Det. Donald R. Joseph said.

Police agencies join forces to fight drug dealers, abuse

Hancock County

Northwestern Ohio police departments and prosecutors' offices have joined forces in an attempt to curb drug dealing and drug abuse.

Hancock, Seneca and Wyandot counties are part of a 10-county task force known as the METRICH Enforcement Unit.

METRICH, an acronym used often in news stories about drug arrests, got its name from a collaborative unit forged in 1986 between the Mansfield Police Department and the Richland County sheriff's and prosecutor's offices. It's short for "Metro-Richland County."

There are about 30 such task forces in Ohio, according to Doug Engel, chief deputy for the Defiance County Sheriff's Office and director of the Multi-Area Narcotics Task Force, which covers Putnam County.

There are also state and federal forces which do similar work.

Most task force operations are done undercover, in unmarked

vehicles, and using plainclothes officers, confidential informants, crime tip lines, and audio-recorded drug buys and sales, according to Findlay police Sgt. Jim Mathias, who was assigned to Hancock County's METRICH unit.

Task forces receive grants to operate and use officers from several departments who share crime intelligence and personnel, Mathias said. Investigations can take months.

In Hancock County, there are six officers from the Findlay Police Department and sheriff's office who conduct these investigations. The county joined the METRICH unit in 1999.

Sometimes, investigators make an arrest immediately after a suspect buys or sells from an undercover officer or confidential informant.

Other times, the suspect is not arrested right away, and the buy or sale is used to build evidence, according to Seneca County Sher-

iff's Detective Sgt. Don Joseph, who works with the Seneca County METRICH Unit.

Sheriff's offices in Hardin and Putnam counties also work with other departments to bust drugs.

In September, officers from the Kenton and Ada police departments, and Hardin County sheriff's and prosecutor's offices formed the "Hardin County Crime Task Force."

Much of its work is dedicated to busting those with heroin, according to Sheriff Keith Everhart.

"I've never seen it like this," he said. "It's destroying the county." Putnam County is joined by police and sheriff's offices in Defiance and Williams counties, which forge the Multi-Area Narcotics Task Force, according to Putnam County Sheriff James Beutler.

It's a spin-off of a crime unit formed by his father, Sheriff Robert Beutler, in the 1970s.

Originally published in The Courier on July 27, 2010.

METRICH raid leads to arrest, confiscation of drugs, cash

Richland County

Authorities confiscated drugs and made one arrest Tuesday at Motel 6, 555 N. Trimble Road.

The METRICH Enforcement Unit, with support from the Allied Special Operations Response Team and Mansfield police, reported it confiscated about 70 grams of cocaine, 12.5 grams of heroin, 8.5 grams of crack, 5 grams of marijuana, 62 Percocet

tablets, 47 Oxycontin tablets, stolen jewelry worth more than \$2,000 and \$2,665 in cash.

Michael B. Evans, 35, of Columbus, was arrested on felony charges of possession of Percocet, Oxycontin, powder and crack cocaine and heroin. The heroin charge is a second-degree felony. The cocaine charge is a fourth-degree felony, and the others are

third-degree felonies.

Evans also was charged with a misdemeanor count of marijuana possession.

Tuesday's operation resulted from a two-month investigation that started with resident complaints.

Originally published in the News Journal on August 19, 2010

Modified bottle conceals contraband

Huron County

The Norwalk Police Department, in conjunction with the METRICH Enforcement Unit, located nine suspected balloons of heroin in a modified Nestea bottle.

Vincent Poland, 23, of 39 Jefferson Street, Norwalk, Ohio, was charged with Possession of Heroin, Possession of Criminal Tools and Possession of Drug

Abuse Instruments.

After being placed under arrest when two syringes were located in the suspect's pocket, a 20 ounce bottle of Nestea was found in Poland's back right pocket. When the two parts of the bottle were separated, officers located nine suspect balloons of heroin.

Poland was also in possession of \$273 and a cell phone.



Heroin balloons concealed in a bottle of Nestea.

2 Knox Co. meth labs found, shut down

Knox County

Two methamphetamine labs were shut down in Knox County early Wednesday.

Knox County Sheriff David Barber said detectives and the Tactical Response Unit searched 3721 VanWinkle Road shortly after 4:30 a.m. and discovered

components and materials used in the manufacture of methamphetamine at the residence and in a garage on the property.

Later Wednesday, authorities discovered a second lab at a nearby residence on VanWinkle Road, which is believed to be re-

lated to the first location.

No arrests were made at either site, but Barber said late Wednesday he expects criminal charges to be filed.

Originally published in the News Journal on July 15, 2010.

METRICH REGIONAL STATS

1 - 3rd QTR Statistical Summary	Jan-Sep	Jan-Sep	09-10
	2009	2010	Change %
CASE ACTIVITY			
Total New Cases	1133	1190	5.0%
Open Pharmaceutical Cases	333	239	-28.2%
Drug-Related Arrests	456	724	58.8%
Non-Drug-Related Arrests	26	44	69.2%
Search Warrants	132	123	-6.8%
Demand Reduction - Public Appearances	60	98	63.3%
Intel Submissions	3162	2542	-19.6%
DRUG REMOVALS			
Cocaine (g)	421.11	3951.4	838.3%
Crack (g)	645.93	539.88	-16.4%
Ecstasy (du)	552	156	-71.7%
Heroin (g)	420.88	337.45	-19.8%
LSD (du)	0	30	3000.0%
Marijuana (g)	41941.11	319454.69	661.7%
Marijuana Plants (#)	2634	2067	-21.5%
Methamphetamine (g)	3.00	8.30	176.7%
Psilocybin Mushrooms (#)	246	0.5	-99.8%
PHARMACEUTICAL REMOVALS			
Diluadid (du)	14	0	-100.0%
Hydrocodone (du)	598	716	19.7%
Methadone (du)	303	498	64.4%
Oxycodone (du)	1,257	1,164	-7.4%

24 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.

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