

Local cops find full meth lab in suitcase



A full methamphetamine lab in a suitcase and locked case.

That's what police said they discovered in a pickup truck during a Willard-area traffic stop Wednesday.

The suspect, Kyle W. Jones, 24, of Goshen, Ind., must post a \$15,000 bond before being released from the Huron County Jail.

He is charged with possession of one or more chemicals that may be used to manufacture a controlled substance. The third-degree felony is punishable by one to five years in prison and a maximum fine of \$10,000.

About 3:24 a.m., Willard Police Officer James Gilliam stopped a white 1993 Chevrolet S-10 pickup truck with an Indiana registration on an equipment violation.

The officer determined Jones was driving with a suspended license and his passenger, Crystal L. Polacheck, 24, also of Goshen, was wanted on a Richland County failure to appear warrant. The original charge of was drug abuse/possession of drugs.

"While performing an inventory of the vehicle, Sgt. Steve Weiss discovered several items of drug paraphernalia in a suitcase along with a locked case," interim Chief Mark Holden said. "Some of the items that were discovered were consistent with the production of methamphetamine."

Police, with the assistance of Huron County Sheriff's Capt. Bob McLaughlin, secured the items inside the truck, which was towed to a secure location.

After Gilliam obtained a search warrant signed by Norwalk Municipal Court Judge John Ridge, an officer from the METRICH Enforcement Unit, who was trained in meth lab operations, "discovered a complete meth lab" upon opening the suitcase and locked case, police said. METRICH is a 10-county drug task force.

"A further search of the vehicle and contents revealed material consistent with distribution of drugs of abuse. All of the drug abuse items were seized pursuant to the search warrant," Holden said.

Because meth labs operate with several dangerous components, both caustic and flammable, a hazardous materials company was called in to take possession of the various chemicals.

Polacheck was arrested and transported to Plymouth and released to the Richland County Sheriff's Office.

At Jones' court hearing Wednesday, Ridge set the suspect's bond at \$15,000 and provisionally appointed the Huron County Public Defender's Office to represent him.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 11 a.m. Friday. If Jones chooses to waive his right to have the state present evidence, the case would be transferred to Huron County Common Pleas Court for a possible grand jury indictment.

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