

Nine indicted in Shelby drug sweep

Six people were arrested on drug trafficking and possession charges Wednesday morning in a multi-agency drug sweep throughout Shelby.

METRICH, the U.S. Marshal's Office and the Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force searched nine Shelby residences on warrants, with the assistance of the Shelby Police Department, from about 9 to 11 a.m. Wednesday.

Four people were arrested on felony heroin trafficking charges: Eric Ensminger, 34; Brittany Kamann, 22; Destrey Potts, 24; and Dylan Sandy, 27. Also arrested were Eric Lauderbaugh, 19 on felony charges of trafficking marijuana and LSD and 19-year-old Justin Bistline, charged with felony possession of synthetic marijuana.

Brandon Manns, 32; Tyler Rice, 30; and Thomas Scherer, 50 were all indicted on felony heroin trafficking charges. Officers attempted to serve warrants for the three men but were unsuccessful. The three had not been arrested as of late Wednesday.

Officers arrested a 22-year-old man on an unrelated outstanding warrant during the drug sweep.

"We want the community and, most importantly, we want the dealers to understand we are serious about the safety our our residents," Shelby Mayor Marilyn John said. "This is not the end. This is just the beginning. There are several other suspects that are under investigation right now for this same activity. We are not going to stop."

Groups composed of officers, agents, probation officers and, in some cases, K-9 units executed searches from indictments recently handed down by the court.

Eric Ensminger of 25 Park Ave. Apt. 2 in Shelby was arrested by the METRICH drug enforcement unit for allegedly selling heroin. The US Marshals Violent Fugitive Task Force raided eight other suspected drug dealers in the city Wednesday morning.(Photo: David H. Polcyn, Dave Polcyn/News Journal)

All arrests occurred without incident.

Shelby resident Ardith Hutson, 69, manages the apartment complex where Eric Ensminger was arrested. Hutson said she has heard of suspicious activity taking place in the apartment for months, and she felt bad that she did not know what was going on.

"The neighbors both told us there has been traffic coming and going from 3 o'clock to all hours of the day," Hutson said. "I have questioned and talked to them about it. We knew nothing about what was going on. All he said was that he had a lot of friends."

Dave Asp has lived in Shelby for 27 years, the last 19 in a house in the first block of Park Avenue.

Asp had been outside mowing his lawn when a team of law enforcement officers arrived to make an arrest. A detective told Asp to stop his lawnmower temporarily while they secured the scene and arrested his neighbor.

Asp, who used to work in prison ministry, lived next to Ensminger. Asp said he had reached out to Ensminger and tried to build a relationship with him in recent years, but he never knew anything about any allegations of drug dealing.

Asp called the drug sweep "excellent" — adding crime affects the resale value of area property in addition to the safety of the neighborhood.

"We can eliminate crime as easily as that," Asp said of taking drug dealers off the streets. "The neighborhood is still not stable. I was never aware of any heroin dealer near my home."

Shelby police Chief Charlie Roub assigned detective Aaron Bushey to METRICH this spring to work exclusively on drug cases in the city.

Roub said his department has had a relationship with METRICH for years. He said the recent addition of Bushey to the organization has proven beneficial, as it grants his department access to the connections, resources and equipment available to METRICH detectives.

"This operation today shows how important that relationship is to our community," Roub said. "This is quite a return on that investment and (the partnership) is something we hope to continue."

Shelby residents waved at police cruisers as they passed by following the arrests.

Originally published in the News Journal on September 11, 2014.