



Conserving the Peace
SHERIFF
WASHINGTON COUNTY
Pat Garrett, Sheriff

PRESS RELEASE

Case #12-519110

Detectives Serve Warrants on 15 Locations in Organized Crime Drug Distribution Money Laundering Case

September 5, 2013—Westside Interagency Narcotics (WIN) Detectives were assisted by additional agencies as they served warrants on 15 residences in the metro area. Multiple large illegal Marijuana growing operations were seized along with cash and packaged drugs that were ready for shipment.

Detectives received information in December 2012 of a group of people were reportedly growing large amounts of Marijuana, shipping it to various states, and laundering the cash proceeds. They began investigating the case and believed they were dealing with an organized crime operation. There were 35 people identified as participating in the illegal drug trafficking activity.



Investigators learned that the organization was turning houses into large growing operations. These houses were located in neighborhoods mostly in Washington County with two in Portland. Some of the houses were owned and some of them were rented by unsuspecting landlords. The houses would be converted to accommodate the extra electricity, ventilation, and water needed for growing the Marijuana. Some rental homes would sustain thousands of dollars in damage caused by the illegal drug operation.

It was discovered that the organization would package and ship over 50 pounds of Marijuana with a value of over \$100,000 a month. Some of the shipments were sent to states where Marijuana is illegal on the state level. It is believed that the organization was operating out of Oregon so the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP) could be manipulated and exploited to traffic drugs for financial gain. The organization would register some of these residences as OMMP grow sites to appear they were in compliance with OMMP but would actually have as much as 10 times the legal number of plants.

These converted homes have increased safety issues and neighborhood livability issues due to illegal wiring and the heat produced from the lighting equipment. On September 2, 2013, one of the growing houses located in Aloha caught fire from apparent electrical

issues associated with illegal wiring for the grow lights. This created an unsafe situation for fire and law enforcement as well as the neighboring houses.

During the warrant services on Thursday morning, WIN Detectives were assisted by Oregon Department Of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, Portland Police Bureau, Beaverton Police Department, Hillsboro Police Department, Oregon National Guard, Homeland Security Investigations, US Marshals Service, and the FBI.

Investigators seized for forfeiture 11 houses, five vehicles, over 2600 Marijuana plants, 34 pounds of dried Marijuana, 12 firearms, and over \$80,000 cash. There will be more seizures as the investigation continues and additional evidence is gathered.

There have not been any arrests made as this case will be forwarded to the Washington County Grand Jury for charging decisions.