



PRESS RELEASE

Westside Interagency Narcotics Team Receives National Award

February 14, 2014 – Westside Interagency Narcotics (WIN) Detectives received the 2013 national award for *Outstanding Marijuana Investigative Effort* for their investigation into a large money laundering operation where marijuana was shipped across the nation for financial gain.

The WIN team was recently recognized by Director R. Gil Kerlikowske from the United States Office of National Drug Control Policy for their collaborative investigation efforts on the case. The team was recognized for their contribution to Oregon's High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) efforts of reducing drug use and its consequences by disrupting and dismantling this drug trafficking organization.



Director Kerlikowske, to Sheriff Garrett's right, presents the award with other HIDTA members present.

The (HIDTA) program, created by Congress with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, provides assistance to Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug-trafficking regions of the United States.

One year of investigating came to culmination in the early morning hours of September 5, 2013, when detectives from agencies across the metro area served

simultaneous search warrants on 17 residences uncovering an extensive organized crime and drug distribution money laundering operation. Investigators learned that the organization was turning houses into large growing operations. The houses were located in neighborhoods in Washington and Multnomah Counties. The houses were illegally 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 there is no state marijuana program. It is believed that the organization was manipulating and exploiting the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP) 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 Oregon law.

This case is proceeding through the courts as indictments are obtained and future court dates are scheduled.

This original press release is attached.