

## Meth Dealer Busted at Redmond Wal-Mart – ½ pound drugs seized

by Cheryl McDermott

In the latest in a series of arrests focusing on methamphetamine dealers in northern Deschutes County and Redmond areas, a 34-year old Madras man was jailed Tuesday evening for possession, manufacture, and delivery of methamphetamine after being observed in a Redmond Wal-Mart parking lot allegedly preparing to deliver drugs. He was found with over ½ pound of meth hidden in an inside coat pocket, and was carrying a large sum of money.

Over 1/2 pound of meth, almost \$1,100 in USD and \$6,420 in Mexican pesos were seized in Tuesday's drug bust in a Wal-Mart parking lot in Redmond. Inset: Alejandro Ortiz-Diaz. Photos provided by CODE Team and DCJ. Detectives from the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Team (CODE) received credible information December 12 indicating that the delivery of a large quantity of meth was going to take place in the Redmond area, and set up surveillance at several locations throughout the city where large-scale narcotics dealers had been arrested while delivering drugs in the past.

At about 7:15 p.m. detectives observed Alejandro Ortiz-Diaz, previously identified by CODE as a dealer of substantial quantities of meth in Central Oregon, walking to and from the parking lot of the Motel 8, which is adjacent to the Redmond Wal-Mart store at 3500 SW 21st Place.

From prior experience, Ortiz-Diaz's suspicious actions were recognized by detectives as being consistent as those of a narcotics dealer preparing to deliver a controlled substance to a second party.

“The suspect's actions were nearly identical to those of Jose Perez-Chavez, who CODE Detectives arrested on August 4th of this year while he was attempting to deliver one pound of methamphetamine to a potential buyer in the same parking lot at Wal-Mart,” said Lt. Jim Porter.

Ortiz-Diaz was taken into custody without incident, and a search revealed over ½ pound of methamphetamine hidden in an inside coat pocket. He was also found in possession of \$1,092 in U.S.

currency, and \$6,420 (about 600 U.S. dollars) in Mexican pesos.

Ortiz-Diaz was lodged in the Deschutes County Adult Correctional Facility on state level charges including possession, manufacture, and delivery of methamphetamine. A cross-designated federal prosecutor will review the charges against Ortiz-Diaz to determine if prosecution in federal court is merited.

An initial review of the suspect's arrest record indicates that he has been arrested in the states of Georgia and California under alias names for trafficking in narcotics.

Lt. Porter said other individuals were contacted and vehicles searched during the operation, and that additional quantities of methamphetamine were seized. Although no arrests were made in the additional seizures, the investigation is continuing, the lieutenant added.

The methamphetamine seized from Ortiz-Diaz and others during the operation has a street-level resale value of more than \$32,000, and is of sufficient quality and quantity to provide 640 user-doses.

Including Tuesday's seizure, CODE has seized more than 19 pounds of high quality methamphetamine, with a street-level resale value of over \$850,000 in the past 11 months.

CODE is a multi-jurisdictional narcotics task force comprised of detectives from all Central Oregon law enforcement agencies including the Bend Police Department, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, Redmond Police Department, Crook County Sheriff's Office, Prineville Police Department, Oregon State Police, United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Deschutes County District Attorney, and the Oregon National Guard.

Direct support for this operation was provided by the Redmond Police Department and their patrol division.

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