

Meth crackdown continues: two more dealers captured

by Cheryl McDermott

The Central Oregon Drug Enforcement (CODE) team captured two more suspected meth dealers Thursday night, the fourth and fifth such arrests on Thursday alone -â€“ bringing the total thus far in 2007 to 26.

CODE team member Jim Porter, a lieutenant with the Bend Police department, says that this yearâ€™s concentrated effort to crackdown on drug sales in Central Oregon has resulted in 14 drug raids; the arrest of 26 suspected dealers; and the seizure of over ten pounds of methamphetamine, 460 marijuana plants, ten and one-half pounds of marijuana, and over \$43,000 cash. The meth seized has a street value of over \$470,000; and the processed marijuana over \$30,000, Porter estimates.

Methamphetamine seized in CODEâ€™s latest drug arrests â€“ CODE photo. Insets (L) Arturo Ponce-Cabrera, (R) Moises Hernandez â€“ DCJ photos.

As a result of the last two arrests on Thursday, Arturo Ponce-Cabrera and Moises Hernandez are in custody on various drug charges.

Ponce-Cabrera, 30, of Salem, was first identified in March 2005 as being involved in delivering large quantities of meth to mid-level dealers in Central Oregon. He was arrested April 30 as he was selling one-half pound of meth to a police operative, Porter said, and in August 2005 was sentenced to 14 months in state prison.

On Tuesday of this week, detectives collected sufficient evidence via surveillance and interviews that â€œclearly indicatedâ€• that Ponce-Cabrera was once again dealing large quantities of meth, despite being on parole from his previous conviction.

On Wednesday, detectives found out that the suspect would be delivering a large shipment the following day.

Detectives staked out several locations that Ponce-Cabrera was known to frequent, Porter said, and the suspect was observed driving a rental car near East Highway 20 and SE 27th Street in Bend about 7:30 p.m. on Thursday. The vehicle was also occupied by one passenger, Porter said, who was later identified as 22-year old Madras resident Moises Hernandez.

Detectives watched Ponce-Cabrera apparently sell drugs, and both he and Hernandez were taken into custody near the intersection of Highway 20 and Benson Way. Detectives seized two ounces of methamphetamine and \$3,100 in cash, the lieutenant said, and found that both men had keys to a room in Redmond's Super-8 Motel, located at 3629 SW 21st Place.

At 11:45 p.m. that night, detectives obtained and executed a search warrant on the motel room that the suspects shared, seizing an additional five ounces of meth, and weight scales, Lt. Porter said.

Ponce-Cabrera and Hernandez are lodged in the Deschutes County Jail and face charges of possession, manufacturing, and delivery of methamphetamine.

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