

## Three jailed in La Pine drug raids

by Cheryl McDermott

A year-long undercover operation investigating a man police suspected of being a “substantial source of supply” for methamphetamine in the La Pine area led to a raid on two homes last night, and ultimately to the arrest of three men.

A Street Crimes Unit (SCU) comprised of detectives from the Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office (DCSO) and the Redmond Police Department who focus on the apprehension of street-level meth dealers were able to locate and arrest Nicholas Velazquez, 32, DCSO’s Sgt. Michael Espinoza reported.

Nicholas Velazquez (left), Scott Pippin (top right), Shane Hempel (lower right) “ DCJ photos  
Detectives gathered evidence during the investigation sufficient to obtain search warrants for two separate residences in La Pine, 52545 Center Drive and 52777 Sunrise Boulevard, the sergeant said.

Together with the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Team, SCU detectives raided the homes about 8 p.m. Drug records, packaging materials, and quantities of cocaine and methamphetamine were seized during the search, said Espinoza.

Velazquez was taken into custody and lodged in the Deschutes County Jail. He is charged with possession, delivery, and manufacture of meth and cocaine.

Two other La Pine men present at the time of the search were also arrested. Scott Pippin, 43, was charged with possession of meth and cocaine, and for frequenting a place where controlled substances are used and/or sold. Shane Hempel, 29, was held on an outstanding warrant in addition to possession of methamphetamine.

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