

Dozens arrested in Oregon drug raids

by Cheryl McDermott

31 arrested in Eugene area; huge organization allegedly imported 25 kilograms of heroin, 15 pounds of meth monthly from Mexico

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has announced the arrest of dozens of persons in the Eugene area who allegedly ran a sophisticated drug trafficking network, importing heroin, meth and cocaine from Mexico and distributing it throughout Oregon, California, and Washington.

The arrests took place following an eight-month investigation that culminated in numerous drug raids and the arrest of 31 people to date, agents reported. Most of the suspects will face charges in federal court over the next several days.

During the investigation, federal and state authorities identified a drug trafficking organization that allegedly imported from Mexico about 25 kilograms of heroin and 15 pounds of meth on a monthly basis into the southern Willamette Valley, then arranged for transportation and eventual distribution in Oregon and elsewhere.

Law enforcement authorities executed almost two-dozen search warrants, and seized heroin, meth, marijuana, several thousands of dollars in cash, and a number of vehicles.

DEA Special Agent in Charge Rodney G. Benson stated, "It is my hope that the results of this investigation, large in scope and reach, will make clear to those persons and organizations, that Oregon and the South Willamette Valley is no safe haven for drug dealers. Our outstanding law enforcement officers in Oregon have drawn a line in the sand, refusing to let dangerous drugs like heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine permanently damage the landscape and quality of life that has long been enjoyed by citizens in the great State of Oregon." Other agencies, in addition to the DEA, include Oregon State Police (OSP); Springfield, Eugene, Junction City, Corvallis, and Cottage Grove Police Departments; Lane, Linn, and Benton County Sheriff's Offices; Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE); Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF); and the United States Marshal's Service.

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