

La Pine man busted for marijuana growing operation

by Cheryl McDermott

A months-long investigation led to the discovery of a sophisticated marijuana growing operation in a La Pine home and shop Tuesday afternoon, and the subsequent arrest of a 32-year old man and seizure of three pounds of pot, drug agents reported.

Steven William Smith - DCJ photo
Detectives with the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement (CODE) team began a surveillance program on 52737 Wayside Loop to monitor activity at the home after they received information that marijuana was being grown. Using information gained from the stakeout as well as other investigative methods, detectives applied for and received a search warrant for the suspect location, Deschutes County Sheriff's Detective Sergeant Scott Shelton said.

Detectives executed the warrant about 3:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 15. Steven William Smith, 32, who had been living at the Wayside Loop home for several months, was at home during the raid. Earlier on May 1, Smith became a "person of interest" as a result of a raid on another La Pine residence at 51897 Pine Loop Drive.

During the search of the Wayside Loop residence and outbuildings, detectives discovered that a shop, comprised of two rooms, had been converted into a sophisticated marijuana growing operation with a diverted and altered electrical system to enhance the growth of the drug. Sgt. Shelton said that at some time before the raid, the growing rooms had been emptied of all plants.

In the home, three pounds of dried marijuana valued at about \$5,000 was found in one of the bedrooms, said Sgt. Shelton.

Smith was taken into custody and lodged in the Deschutes County Jail. He is charged with possession and manufacture of a controlled substance, and conspiracy to manufacture a controlled substance.

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

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