

One Pound of Meth Seized, Man Arrested in Redmond

by Richard Burton

Following investigative leads, agents from the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Team found a pound of methamphetamine worth over \$40,000 in a hidden compartment of a van in the parking lot of the Redmond Wal-Mart during the noon-hour on Friday, August 4th. The driver of the van, 33 year-old Salem resident Jose Perez-Chavez was arrested on multiple charges and taken to the Deschutes County Jail. Two passengers in the vehicle, an 18 year old woman and a 2 year old child were allowed to go free.

The plastic-wrapped pound of Meth was found in a hidden compartment in the suspect's van. Photo courtesy of CODE Team. Acting on a tip that a substantial shipment of meth was being trafficked from the Salem area and destined for delivery to a location in Central Oregon, detectives of the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Team (CODE) identified the suspect vehicle as a 1999 Chevrolet van, and were able to locate the van in the parking lot of the Wal-Mart on SW 21st Place in Redmond.

Surveillance units identified Perez-Chavez as the driver of the vehicle, and determined that the suspect was traveling with 18 year-old Yuriana Reyes-Rivera and their 2 year old daughter.

CODE detectives with the assistance of the Redmond-Deschutes Street Crimes Team took Perez-Chavez into custody and searched the van with his consent. A thorough search revealed a hidden compartment that contained one pound of meth, with a street value estimated in excess of \$40,000.

Perez-Chavez was lodged in the Deschutes County Jail, and a later investigation by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) revealed that the suspect is also known as Gerado Zuniga-Bedolla.

Perez-Chavez will face charges of Delivery and Possession of a Controlled Substance (meth), in addition to Felony Endangering the Welfare of a Minor.

According to Lt. Jim Porter with CODE, since January 1st of 2006 the team has seized over 9.5 pounds of methamphetamine within Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties, that has a street value of over \$430,000. This amount of methamphetamine is of sufficient quantity to provide a single user quantity dosage for over 17,000 drug-addicted individuals in Central Oregon.

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

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