

STATE OF OHIO
LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE
MONTHLY COMMANDER REPORT
July 2003

The Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force Commander Monthly Report is a summary of documentation submitted to the Director of Law Enforcement Services within The Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services. The report serves as a tool to gauge the prevalence and patterns of illegal drug activity in the state. The report also allows commanders to provide information on current criminal activities and trends within specific jurisdictions. Information learned during investigations that could benefit other task forces, law enforcement agencies, state agencies, and OCJS are also shared in the report. The report is submitted to OCJS electronically, thus allowing for rapid dissemination of the information to key stakeholders and partners.

Drug Prevalence and Trends of Criminal Activity in Ohio

In Northeast Ohio cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, oxycontin, ecstasy and ketamine continue to be prevalent. In Summit County three red phosphorus labs were seized and dismantled. It has been noticed by the Summit County Drug Unit that clandestine lab operators are becoming more mobile and are using different locations for the various stages of manufacture. In neighboring Stark County the Metropolitan Narcotics Unit reports that they are receiving more information regarding the current operation of meth labs within the county. The TAG Law Enforcement Task Force, which covers Trumbull, Ashtabula and Geauga Counties, reports the number of meth labs dismantled this year in Ashtabula County to number sixteen. Pharmaceutical Diversion continues to be a problem throughout the state. The Lake County Pharmacy Diversion Unit is continuing to make arrests for deception to obtain drugs, illegal processing of drug documents and theft of drugs from hospitals by health care professionals.

Central Ohio drug task forces report that marijuana, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and oxycontin as drugs most prevalent in the area. In Fairfield and Hocking Counties, according to the Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit, heroin continues to be supplied to the region by Columbus street gangs. Local residents are traveling to Columbus to pick up heroin for redistribution. Heroin is being purchased in quantities as small as one bag at .2 grams for \$20.00 to 10 bags at .2 grams each for \$200.00. A major problem associated with heroin use in the region is the rise in the number of addicts. Within the jurisdiction of the Fairfield-Hocking Major Crimes Unit there is no treatment facility. The Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force, headquartered in Licking County, has noticed an increase in methamphetamine manufacture within its jurisdiction.

In Western Ohio the Lima-Allen County Narcotics Task Force continues to investigate the sale of crack cocaine, which is the drug of choice in the area. Heroin is making a come back with a relatively small number of individuals. Meth is alleged to be manufactured in two areas of the extreme western part of the county.

In Southern Ohio the Lawrence Drug Task Force reports that there has been a substantial increase in crack cocaine. Most of the drug dealers in the area are from larger cities such as Columbus, Cincinnati and Detroit, MI. The task force reports that there has been a decrease in oxycontin in the area. The reduction in the use of oxycontin is due to the targeting of several physicians by the task force and attention from the media.

Information Obtained During Task Force Investigations

The Lawrence Drug Task Force has begun utilizing the FBI in Clarksburg, WV. to identify out of town drug dealers. This resource, which had been neglected in the past, has been quite successful in identifying out of town dealers. By faxing the FBI facility a fingerprint, task force investigators can normally obtain identification information about suspects within one hour.

The Piqua-Shelby Covert Regional Drug Task Force advises that drug dealers are obtaining transmission frequencies for body wires and using scanners to detect the devices on undercover operatives.

The Summit County Drug Unit recently found red phosphorus obtained from road flare striker caps. 150 strikers were seized. The task force has received intelligence that a meth "cook" recently released from prison made an out of state purchase of approximately 180 cases of road flares.

The Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force notes that a better network of communication seems to exist between methamphetamine manufacturers than was previously believed to be the case.