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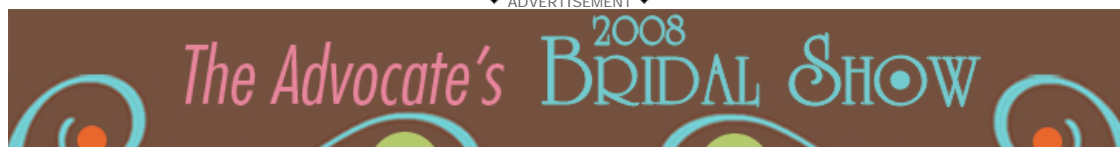
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Man sentenced for growing marijuana

NewarkAdvocate.com staff reports

NEWARK — A Heath man pleaded guilty today to growing 189 marijuana plants at his home but avoided a prison sentence by agreeing to cooperate with the prosecution of his unindicted co-defendant.

Joseph G. Reiser, 29, was sentenced to three years of community control after he was found guilty of one count of illegal cultivation of marijuana, a third-degree felony. Authorities seized 15,215 grams — or 33.5 pounds — of marijuana from his 5321 Cotterman Road home during a Sept. 6 raid by the Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force, according to court documents.

Firearms, including an assault rifle and a loaded 0.38-caliber handgun, also were discovered during the raid.

A firearms specification was dropped in exchange for his guilty plea to the cultivation count, Common Pleas Judge Jon Spahr said.

Licking County Assistant Prosecutor Dan Huston asked for and received a condition of his probation that Reiser must continue cooperation with the investigation of another man who was originally charged for the same incident.

After a bond hearing, the suspect was released because prosecutors wanted to secure Reiser's testimony first.

An indictment with similar charges now can be expected for the 28-year-old Westerville man, Huston said.

other drug charges, he added.

The suspected co-defendant is being investigated in Franklin County for

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