

2010

Ohio Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force Annual Report



Overview of the Ohio Multijurisdictional Task Forces

The Office of Criminal Justice Services provides federal and state grant funds to Ohio's multi-jurisdictional task forces. In 2010, 32 task forces received funding from OCJS for over \$7.2 million dollars.

Ohio's multijurisdictional task forces generally consist of representatives from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and prosecutors. They tend to target mid- to upper-level level drug trafficking and organized criminal activity for which it would be difficult for any one jurisdiction to build a case. In this way, they are not duplicative of individual agencies, but are a critical addition to local law enforcement.

Funding for multi-jurisdictional task forces is available through OCJS from two primary sources—the federal Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) and the state Drug Law Enforcement Fund. Task forces could apply for both sources. In 2010, OCJS funded 26 of the 32 task forces at a total of over \$2.3 million dollars through JAG, and 29 of the 32 task forces at a total of over \$3.3 million dollars through the state's Drug Law Enforcement Fund.

In addition to these primary funding sources, task forces were eligible to apply for two special grants, both of which provided money to task forces during 2010: ARRA (stimulus) JAG funding and the Ohio Prescription Drug Grant. Eight task forces received slightly over \$1 million dollars in ARRA JAG funding. The Ohio Prescription Drug Grant provided more than \$250,000 to help local law enforcement agencies and task forces to investigate and prosecute prescription drug abuse cases. Seven task forces received a collective total of \$84,000 from this grant.

As a requirement of the JAG and Drug Law Enforcement Fund grants, task forces submitted an annual performance report highlighting their activities and accomplishments for calendar year 2010. This report documents the activities and accomplishments of 29¹ task forces during CY2010. The report focuses illegal (non-pharmaceutical) drug activity, pharmaceutical drug diversion, seizures and forfeitures, and other (non-drug) task force activities. A special section at the end highlights particularly successful task force investigations and activities.

¹ Three task forces were newly formed during 2010 and were not able to provide a full year's worth of data. They are not included in this report.

Illegal Drug Activity

New Cases

Twenty-nine task forces worked a total of 8,541 new cases in 2010. A case is defined as having a significant potential for prosecution. For this report, cases are based on individuals, not charges.

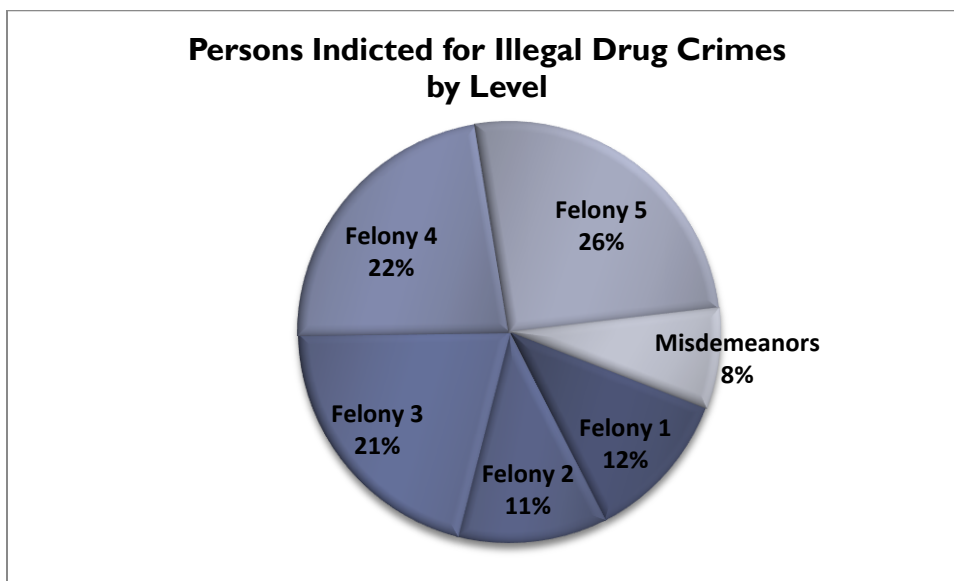
Search Warrants

The task forces executed a total of 2,054 search warrants. This includes paper search warrants, paper warrants on cars, vehicle searches in which drugs are found, and property consent searches.

Indictments

The task forces indicted 3,597 individuals. Of these, 3,341 were non-federal indictments and 256 were federal indictments.

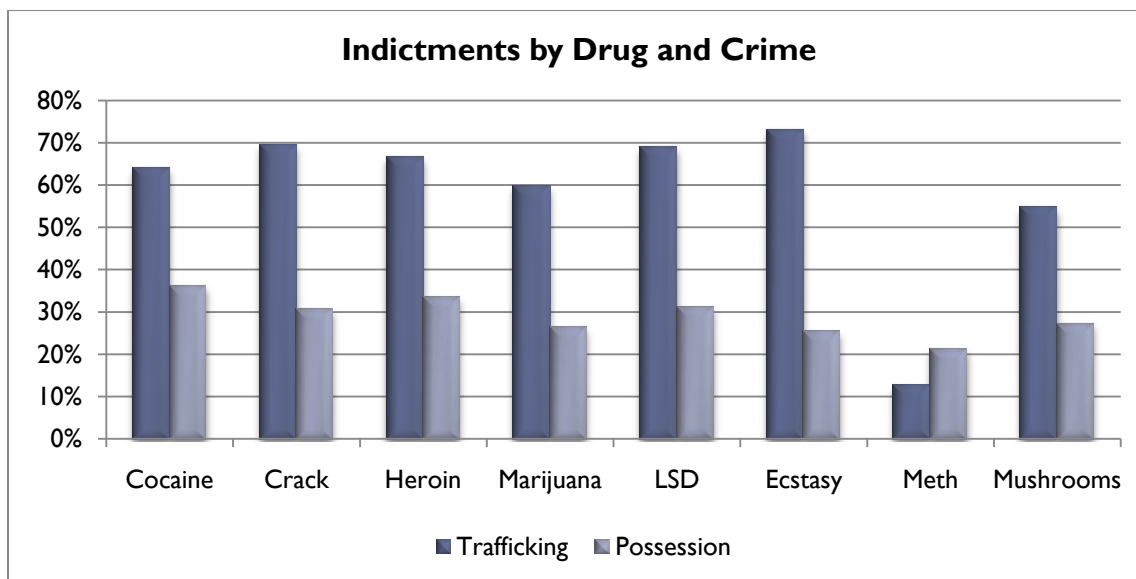
Indictments were also reported by felony level. The following chart shows a breakdown of the highest felony level for which persons were indicted. Ninety-two percent of indictments were for felonies, another indication that task forces focus on upper-level criminal activity.



Indictments were broken down by type of drug and type of drug crime (cultivation, manufacturing/chemical assembly, possession, trafficking). Lower-level charges are often part of building a case for more severe charges. Task forces were asked to report on all indictments, not just the highest charge. The majority of indictments were for trafficking (N=2,363), followed by possession (N=1,210). Cultivation and manufacturing made up a total of 13 percent of all indictments. However, these indictments were highly drug-specific. Ninety-eight percent of indictments for cultivation were for

marijuana. Likewise, ninety-eight percent of indictments for manufacturing/chemical assembly were for methamphetamine.

Because trafficking and possession made up the majority of crimes for which people were indicted, these crimes were analyzed by drug type. With the exception of meth and, to some extent, mushrooms, roughly 60 to 70 percent of all drug indictments were for trafficking, and roughly 25 to 35 percent were for possession.



Drugs Removed by Task Force

Task forces reported on the total amount of drugs they took off the streets in 2010. The following table shows that marijuana (plants and processed) was the most frequently seized drug, followed by cocaine. *Commanders Monthly* reports have indicated an increase in heroin availability, and the seizures support this finding.

	Amount of Drug Seized	Estimated Street Value (per unit of measure)
Cocaine	140,139 g	\$100
Crack cocaine	6,736 g	\$100
Heroin	35,546 g	\$150
	1139 UD	
Marijuana (processed)	351,277 lb	\$1,200
Marijuana (plants)	57,005 plants	\$1,000
LSD	1,138 UD	\$9
Ecstasy	2,344 UD	\$17.50
	482 g	
Methamphetamine	9,732 g	\$100
Psilocybin mushrooms	3,260 g	\$23

Pharmaceutical Diversion

Diversion is defined as any criminal act involving a prescription drug. Thirteen of the 29 task forces have a specialized diversion unit. The median number of officers assigned full time to a diversion unit is one (1). Regardless of whether a task force has a diversion unit, nearly all (N=25) reported initiating at least one pharmaceutical case. In all, 1,282 pharmaceutical cases were initiated in 2010, with a median of 32 cases per task force. If a task force had a dedicated diversion unit or officer, the median number of diversion cases worked by task force was 54. For those task forces that did not have a dedicated diversion unit or officer, the median number of diversion cases worked by the task force was 9.5.

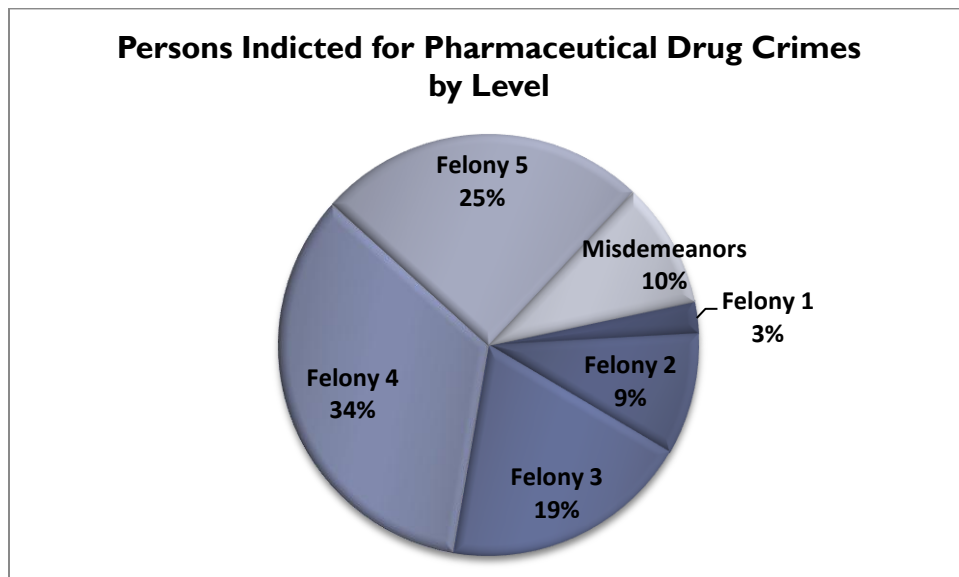
New Cases

An attempt was made to identify health professionals involved in pharmaceutical drug crimes. Of the 1,282 pharmaceutical cases initiated, 26 cases involved physicians, 7 involved pharmacists, 62 involved nurses, and one involved a dentist. Task forces also identified 288 cases of 'non-health professionals', defined as those who work in a health care facility as support staff.

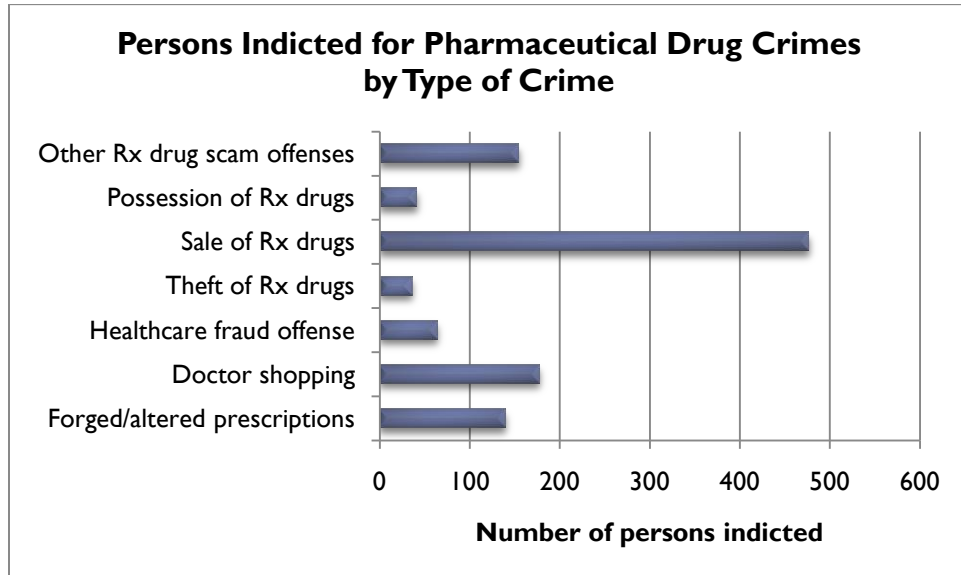
Indictments

There were 686 persons indicted in 2010 for pharmaceutical offenses. Of these, 193 were identified as working in a health care setting. 87 percent were identified as support staff, and 12 percent were nurses.

The following chart shows the break down by level.



People were indicted for a variety of crimes, including forged/altered prescriptions, doctor shopping, health care fraud, and theft, sale, or possession of prescription drugs. The following chart shows the number of persons indicted for such crimes. All crimes (not just the most serious crime) in which a person was indicted are reported.



Drugs Removed

The following table identifies the most commonly reported drugs removed upon indictment. Task forces distinguished between drugs seized and diverted. *Diverted* reflects the amount of prescription drugs that have been identified as diverted dosage units identified in an investigation, but never seized.

Type of drug (brand name in parentheses)	Dosage units seized	Dosage units diverted
Alprazolam (Xanax®)	5,252	93,284
Amphetamine mixture (Adderall®)	1,654	16,853
Carisoprodol (Soma®)	423	19,238
Codeine (Tylenol® #3, Tylenol® #4, cough syrup)	299	2,928
Diazepam (Valium®)	512	34,582
Fentanyl, fentanyl citrate (Duragesic® patches, Actiq®, Fentora®)	5	5,770
Hydrocodone (Vicodin®, Lortab®, Lorcet®)	14,125	230,125
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid®)	218	27,064
Lorazepam (Ativan®)	112	4,970
Meperidine (Demerol®)	1	21
Methadone (liquid/wafers/pills)	3,343	140,801
Methylphenidate (Ritalin®)	685	2,060
Morphine (MS Contin®, EMBEDA®, Kadian®)	1,209	42,184
Oxycodone—Extended Release (ER) (OxyContin®)	8,652	77,974
Oxycodone—Immediate Release (IR) (Endocet®, Percocet®, Percodan®, Roxicodone®)	12,722	417,615
Pentazocine (Talwin®)	0	4,378
Phentermine (Adipex-P®, Fastin®, Ionamin®)	1	0
Propoxyphene (Darvon®)	450	2,812
Tramadol (Ultram®, Ultracet®)	2,467	47,177
Zolpidem Tartrate (Ambien®)	878	11,010
Other Rx drugs	1,595	1,560

In addition to the prescription drugs listed in the table, task forces submitted information on other drugs they seized or diverted in their region. They include the following:

- Sertraline (Zoloft®)
- Clonazepam (Klonopin®)
- Tizanidine
- Septocaine®
- Steroids
- Suboxone®
- Robaxin®
- BZP
- Buprenorphine (Subutex®)
- Prednisone
- Tussionex®
- Naloxone
- Subutex®
- Opana®
- Neurontin®
- Seroquel®
- Bupropion
- Folic acid
- Warfarin
- Methylprednisolone
- Augmentin®
- Trazodone
- Valtrex®

Criminal Assets Seized and Forfeited

The following table identifies the type, number, and value of criminal assets seized by drug task forces in 2010. Asset *seizure* generally refers to the seizure of drug-related assets that have been used to facilitate drug trafficking or are derived from drug trafficking. The estimated value of all assets seized was over \$17.1 million.

Item	Number seized	Estimated value
Motor vehicles	302	\$3,052,668
Currency	*	\$12,407,026
Real estate properties	14	\$1,353,860
Electronics	*	\$187,390
Other items	*	\$169,415

*Some task forces only reported an estimated value seized (and not a count of the number seized) for these items, so an exact count could not be determined.

The next table identifies the type, number, and value of criminal assets forfeited by drug task forces in 2010. Asset *forfeiture* refers to those seized assets proven in court to have been used to facilitate drug trafficking or derived from drug trafficking and are thus forfeited to government entities. The estimated value of all assets forfeited was over \$3.6 million.

Item	Number forfeited	Estimated value
Motor vehicles	142	\$436,052
Currency	*	\$2,988,103
Real estate properties	5	\$154,412
Electronics	*	\$26,066
Other items	*	\$19,283

*Some task forces reported only an estimated value forfeited (and not a count of the number forfeited) for these items, so an exact count could not be determined.

Other Task Force Activity

New Non-Drug Cases

While the focus of the Ohio's multijurisdictional task forces is centered on drug crime, they often expand the scope of their investigations to include other violent and property crime. Only four task forces did not report examples of cases they worked outside of drug cases. Examples of non-drug related cases that task forces have initiated or assisted with include:

- Homicides
- Theft (including motor vehicle theft)
- Gambling
- Robbery
- Witness intimidation
- Kidnapping
- Arson
- Assault and sexual assault
- Burglary/B&E
- Money laundering
- Stolen weapons
- Prostitution
- Child endangering
- CCW
- Domestic violence
- Terrorism
- Murder for hire
- Liquor violations
- Child pornography
- Counterfeit money
- Identity theft

Firearms Confiscated

In 2010, task forces confiscated 908 firearms.

Presentations and Trainings

In 2010, all but three task forces reported that they offered presentations and/or trainings on drug-related issues. A total of 500 presentations were given to a total of 15,411 attendees, an average of 30.8 attendees per presentation.

Task Force Highlights

Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force (CODE)

The task force recently added two criminal interdiction detectives. These agents are assigned to uniform and equipped with marked task force vehicles, along with one of the agents being a trained K-9 unit. This has been a great asset for the task force in assisting with vehicle stops in high drug traffic areas, serving arrest and search warrants, knock and talks, and conducting criminal/drug interdiction on the many highway miles in our jurisdiction.

Drug Abuse Reduction Task Force (DART)

In response to the significant increase in both the abuse and manufacturing of methamphetamine, DART hosted a methamphetamine awareness training to all Hamilton County police agencies. Over 30 officers and agents attended. The following day, two officers that attended the training located a mobile methamphetamine lab. These officers indicated that this seizure was due to the training in which they had received the day prior.

Delaware County Drug Task Force (LEAP)

The Delaware County Drug Task Force seized 240 large marijuana plants and 2,500 grams of psilocybin mushrooms from a residence in Genoa Township. An alert pilot from BCI&I spotted the suspected marijuana plants from the air. The marijuana growth was confirmed by a pilot from the Ohio State Highway Patrol. The Delaware County Drug Task Force is continuing their investigation into the growth. The street value of the marijuana seized is approximately \$200,000.00.

With the alarming increase of heroin abuse on the rise, the task force is aggressively taking down heroin suppliers and users. Too many overdoses and near overdoses are being reported, and innocent people are falling victim to users finding a quick way to find money, i.e., burglaries, thefts, etc.

Deception to Obtain Dangerous Drug investigations are overwhelming the drug task force. A pharmacy contacted the task force and advised of a fake prescription that was called in for hydrocodone that the suspect was expected to pick up later that evening. It was learned that the suspect had called in numerous prescriptions for herself and obtained various controlled substances. The suspect arrived at the pharmacy, picked up her prescription and was arrested while leaving. While the suspect was being booked in the Delaware County Jail, officers located a prescription bottle containing morphine prescribed to another individual hidden on her person. The suspect was charged with Deception to Obtain a Dangerous Drug and Illegal Conveyance.

Franklin County Drug Task Force

The Franklin County Drug Task Force acquired two German shepherds that are assigned to two task force officers. Both officers have marked sport utility vehicles with cages to support undercover operations. Many times when canines are needed, uniformed patrol K9's are unavailable, and having the two dogs allows operations to run smoothly.

The addition of the two canines has also allowed the task force to conduct drug interdictions at Greyhound bus stations. In 2010, one bus interdiction discovered a kilo of cocaine in a person's bag, and another who had pills was identified as having ties to a major drug offender.

The following highlight successful task force investigations:

- In April, a search warrant was executed at Value Inn, in which two individuals were found in possession of 47 lbs of marijuana.
- In May, an individual was arrested for Conspiracy to distribute more than 400 kilograms of cocaine in the Southern District of Ohio.
- In June, one individual flew into Columbus from California with over 500 lbs of marijuana concealed in 13 bags of luggage.
- An individual sold 100 bottles of anabolic steroids to an undercover officer for \$5100.
- In July, seven search warrants were executed in which over \$136,000 in cash was seized.
- Two individuals were found in possession of cocaine, pills, and guns along with \$26,541 in cash. Both subjects were indicted federally.
- In August, two individuals were found in possession of 101 prescription bottles—99 from Florida and two from Ohio. Also found on one of the individuals was \$117,439 in cash. Of the 6,972 pills found, 4,145 were oxycodone, 1,061 were Oxycontin, and 1,766 were Xanax.
- In November, 7,000 lbs of marijuana was seized from a U-Haul vehicle used to transport the narcotics. In addition to the seizure, 13 people were arrested including four from Texas, one from Arizona, one from California, and seven from Ohio.

Grand Lake Task Force

The Grand Lake Task Force continues to work with other agencies to gather information or informants. It is believed that with all the cooperation we have received in our area for agencies outside the task force, this has led to our success in 2010.

Greater Warren County Drug Task Force

During 2010 the Warren County Drug Task Force was involved in several innovative and successful programs involving drug trafficking and money laundering relating to illegal drug sales.

- Two separate large-scale operations involving used car lots were disrupted by serving multiple search warrants and seizure warrants at the places of business and the owners' personal residences. This resulted in the seizure of over 80 motor vehicles and hundreds of thousands of dollars in either cash or property.

Although both operations were somewhat unique, both involved used car operations that had been involved in large-scale drug trafficking of marijuana and/or cocaine, and were now involved in money laundering to facilitate local drug trafficking enterprises. In addition to money laundering, large scale income tax evasion accompanied their illegal enterprise.

- The drug task force also initiated a highway interdiction program that specifically targeted hotel/motels directly off exits associated with interstate highways that run through our jurisdiction. During this two-month period, illegal drugs having a street value of over \$150,000.00 were seized, along with \$60,000.00 in cash, one vehicle, and several handguns. This program was unique in the fact that plain clothes undercover officers were used in this operation in addition to two uniform officers, one being a drug canine. The undercover officers and uniform deputies working in tandem significantly enhanced the enforcement effort near or on our interstate highways.

Greene County ACE Task Force

ACE Task Force, assisted by the City of Dayton Police Department's Special Investigation Division and Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, conducted a two-week Basic and Advanced Narcotics Investigation School on April 26 – May 7, 2010 called The Miami Valley Basic and Advanced Investigation School. The school closely follows the Drug Enforcement Administration's Basic Investigation School given nationally, but was slightly different than the DEA Basic School because it emphasized the State of Ohio narcotics laws. The training also included a three-day session on search warrant service, vehicle stops, simunitions, and open air arrest taught by the National Tactical Officer's Association. During the school a one-day segment was devoted to a motivational speaker, Lt. Col. David Grossman, who spoke on the "Bullet Proof Mind". Over 300 law enforcement officers attended the presentation of Lt. Col. Grossman. ACE Task Force was a motivating stimulus for this school and the school was financially funded by ACE Task Force, Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, and Dayton Police Department.

Hamilton County Regional Narcotics Unit

In recent years, the Regional Narcotics Unit has developed an initiative to identify significant Greater Cincinnati drug trafficking organizations through an intelligence-led process. Collaboration with the Cincinnati Police Intelligence Section, other Cincinnati covert field units, the Intelligence Coordinator for the U.S. Attorney's Office, and others was intensified to identify these "significant violators" – those

whose arrest would have the greatest disruptive effect upon Greater Cincinnati drug trafficking and related violence, and target those “significant violators” for investigation, regardless of the availability of active leads.

The Significant Violator Program, funded in part by the Ohio Drug Law Enforcement Fund grant, replaced previous physical surveillance and interdiction program location monitoring with greater reliance upon electronic surveillance, court-ordered interceptions of communications, tracking suspects through use of GPS and monitoring their telephone calling practices to identify other trafficking organization members, trafficking patterns, and locations of trafficking activity, etc.

Investigation highlights resulting from the Significant Violator Program are described in turn.

- In 2010, a drug trafficking organization involved in multi-kilogram cocaine and heroin distributions was identified. Although several high-volume distributors were involved, the organization was controlled to a significant extent by a local convicted drug trafficker and nightclub/illegal gambling operation owner, who also had been identified as a possible suspect in several Cincinnati drug-related homicides. An investigation was initiated by the Regional Narcotics Unit and the Cincinnati Police Intelligence Section. Thirty pounds of cocaine and over \$1 million in drug trafficking and other illegal enterprise assets were seized from drug organization members at various times. Fourteen subjects, including the homicide suspect, were arrested and prosecuted for drug trafficking, money laundering, and RICO violations in Ohio State and Federal Courts.
- Also in 2010, an investigation was initiated to assist the Cincinnati Police Department to identify the perpetrator in a series of offenses committed against a local newspaper journalist. An unidentified subject had sprayed paint on her car and on her residence entry door, twice damaged her car by gunfire, and finally committed an aggravated robbery against her and another journalist. During the last offense, the perpetrator forced his victim from one location to another at gunpoint. After each incident, the perpetrator contacted the journalist and several of her associates through fraudulent Facebook and other on-line accounts, threatening further violence if she did not accede to his demands, including public apologies and resignation from employment. Finally, the perpetrator shot at the occupied vehicle of one of her friends, nearly striking the driver. In subsequent e-mails, the violator threatened to continue shooting those associated with her unless his demands were met. The fraudulent e-mails were sent from WiFi account locations in Clarksville, Indiana, Aurora, Colorado, Salt Lake City, Utah and elsewhere.

To assist the investigation, Regional Narcotics Unit personnel executed a number of search warrants to obtain information from electronic and telephone communications providers, and initiated electronic tracking on suspects developed in the case. Subsequent to the final shooting incident, information was developed from Facebook communications which finally identified the perpetrator, who traveled extensively throughout the United States. Electronic tracking of that subject was initiated, and within a short time, he traveled from Chicago to Cincinnati and was arrested as he conducted surveillance on the last shooting victim’s residence. When arrested by Regional Narcotics Unit agents, the suspect was found in possession of a 9mm semi-automatic pistol which was ballistically matched to prior shootings. The subject was indicted for Kidnapping, Aggravated Robbery and Felonious Assault.

- Late in 2010, a convicted drug trafficker and several other subjects were involved in a series of robberies of southeast Indiana casino patrons. The robbery victims, who resided in southern Ohio, southern Indiana and northern Kentucky, were identified by their perpetrators at the casinos, subsequent to having won sizeable amounts of money while gambling. Victims were then followed to their residences or hotels, where they were confronted and robbed at gunpoint. Over 30 such offenses were identified during which the perpetrators stole approximately \$100,000.00.

An investigation of this organization was initiated by Regional Narcotics Unit agents assigned to the Significant Violator Program, teamed with Cincinnati Police Intelligence and Major Offender Sections, and Indiana State Police. Investigative tactics were employed, which documented the suspects' identity, movements and communications as they targeted additional victims. The offenders were arrested during an effort to rob their final victim, a Regional Narcotics Unit undercover officer, who had been presented to them as a casino patron in possession of a large amount of currency. During the investigation, the subjects were also identified to be involved in the trafficking of marijuana; however prosecution for those offenses were declined in favor of a 29-count indictment alleging Aggravated Robbery, Kidnapping and Felonious Assault in Hamilton County, Ohio. Additional indictments against these subjects are anticipated in Dearborn and Ohio counties in Indiana.

The tactics employed in the Significant Violator Program have also been of value during the investigation of other Regional Narcotics Unit targets.

- In 2010, an undercover investigation resulted in the arrests of several subjects for their involvement in the distribution of marijuana sourced to Ohio from California. Arrested in Cincinnati were four drug traffickers operating locally, and two California residents who were sources of drug supply to the Cincinnati organization. Seized during the incident and subsequent searches were 156 pounds of marijuana, \$12,654.00 and other drug trafficking-related assets.
- Also in 2010, a Cincinnati drug trafficker was arrested in possession of four pounds of cocaine. Also seized during subsequent residence and storage garage searches were \$37,467.00, several vehicles and other drug trafficking-related assets. During the investigation, an Indianapolis resident was identified as source of cocaine supply to the Cincinnati distribution organization. An undercover investigation was initiated with Indianapolis/Marion County officers against that subject, which resulted in his arrest for possession of cocaine and \$92,985.00. Further investigation identified his source of cocaine supply as a Mexican National, also residing in Indianapolis. That subject was also arrested during a subsequent undercover investigation, while in the process of making an additional multi-pound cocaine delivery.

Lake County Narcotics Agency

- The task force continues to generate close professional working relationships with pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, primary doctors, emergency room doctors, and pain management doctors. The task force is constantly offering workshops and training for health care providers, law

enforcement, court personnel, etc. The task force also works closely with the Ohio State Nursing, Medical, Pharmacy and Dental Boards.

Lawrence Drug and Major Crimes Task Force

A coordinated effort with local Kentucky officials led to six arrests, recovery of nearly over 700 pills, and over \$33,000.00. The suspects had been coming to our Tri-State area for over one year. From interviews, the task force gathered intelligence that supported the fact they were bringing 2,000 pills—oxycodone and Xanax—per trip (monthly) to sell. The ring leader pled and received eight years in Ohio prison and seizure of proceeds. Others pled and received lesser sentences.

Promising approach: It is important to maintain professional relationships with partners, even in another neighboring state such as West Virginia and Kentucky.

Through informant cooperation, the task force recently began intercepting parcels containing stuffed animals shipped from Miami, Florida. Within the stuffed animal are oxycodone and Xanax.

The task force coordinated and sponsored a first-ever Drug Take Back program, resulting in over 44 pounds of prescription medicines that were provided to the DEA for disposal.

Promising approach: The program will have public participation and will remove dangerous drugs from home medicine cabinets. Several large drop-offs came from elderly folks who had an abundance of medicine at home, typically because a spouse had passed away and they did not know what to do with the medicine.

Via information sharing, the task force was contacted by an ATF staff member who reportedly had a convicted murderer that possessed guns and was selling oxycodone. As a result of that contact, an informant was able to make several purchases of oxycodone at 100 pills per purchase.

Promising approach: Create and maintain partnerships with federal, state, and local personnel. Be willing to work together.

The task force was contacted by a drug enforcement group near Charleston, W.V. An individual provided information of a person in our county involved in a large-scale marihuana trafficking ring. The task force became involved, assisted with surveillance, search warrants, etc. The result was recovery at one location of 30 pounds of marihuana, \$93,000.00 in cash and 25-30 handguns, rifles, etc. At another location \$65,000.00 was recovered. As a result of a several month investigation at least ten people have been indicted in Federal Court in West Virginia. The cases await Federal disposition. Those involved, per news releases, are alleged to have been trafficking thousands of pounds of marihuana and this investigation dismantled the DTO.

Promising approach: Another example of positive relationships with out-of-state agencies resulting in overwhelmingly positive outcome(s).

Knock & Talks: In 2009 the task force started using knock and talks more often, especially at times when informants were not readily available for covert tasks. The knock and talks have proven successful several times in arresting wanted suspects and recovering proceeds.

Promising approach: This is the result of a simple follow-up received into a hot line the task force operates. The hot-line receives numerous calls weekly, provides excellent investigative leads, and has no overhead costs to our task force.

The task force has worked to increase its investigators' knowledge of and ability to address the prescription drug trafficking and abuse problem. This includes pairing an investigator to work with a "seasoned" diversion investigator, and promoting staff attendance at training directed at Rx investigations.

Promising approach: Educate investigators and broaden investigative knowledge and skills to enhance the task force's ability to combat our #1 problem...prescription drug trafficking and diversion.

Lorain County Drug Task Force

There has been continued coordination between local and federal law enforcement regarding a recent spike in heroin trafficking in Lorain County originating from Chicago and Detroit. Approval was obtained for a coordinated investigation by the task force, ICE, DEA and Lorain Police Dept. A Title III application process is anticipated regarding the drug trafficking organization established in Lorain County.

From June to December 2010, the task force has been involved in a large (kg) quantity cocaine investigation with the DEA and ICE in preparation for a Title III wire intercept. The investigation involves Mexico-Texas distribution.

During the same period, the task force worked with the DEA on a Title III wire intercept case involving large (kg) quantities of heroin in Dayton Ohio. Indictments were issued federally.

The task force successfully completed two Operation Medicine Cabinet events in 2010 which resulted in the recovery of prescription/narcotics/counter drugs totaling a weight of 1,160 lbs.

Mahoning Valley Law Enforcement Task Force

The Mahoning Valley Law Enforcement Task Force (MVLETF) initiated a Criminal Interdiction Program in 2010, focusing on Domestic Highway Enforcement efforts along the major interstates and hotel/motel areas in the Mahoning Valley. In support of these efforts, the MVLETF put a Narcotics Detection K-9 team into service, focusing on parcel interdiction as well as supporting the highway interdiction program. During the program approximately 32 percent of the stops conducted led to an arrest.

Multi-Area Narcotics (MAN) Unit

Forty individuals were indicted in 2010 by the MAN Unit for either manufacture or assembly of chemicals for the manufacture of methamphetamine. The majority of these cases involved Williams County, and some of the cases involved persons coming into Williams County from Michigan and

Indiana. The MAN Unit officers have been alerting the pharmacies of persons suspected in the manufacture of meth, and therefore have put the pharmacies on alert. The communication between pharmacies in Williams County has also assisted in these cases. Local pharmacies have begun to call the MAN Unit when persons come into their stores to purchase pseudoephedrine. Additionally, local hardware stores have begun to communicate with MAN Unit officers when suspicious persons are purchasing items associated with the manufacture of methamphetamine. These communications have proven valuable in the arrests of persons involved in the illegal manufacture of methamphetamine.

The MAN Unit has been in contact with the local media in an effort to educate the general public of the dangers of prescription drugs. Several articles have been published in the local newspapers trying to educate the public on the dangers of keeping old medications. These articles have also included information on how to dispose of unneeded and expired prescription medications. A take-back program was also initiated. In one take-back event, over 22 pounds of prescription medications were destroyed.

Additionally, similar articles have been published in the local papers regarding the new K-2 and Spice and the dangers associated with these “incense”. The MAN Unit has investigated a couple of cases which involved the use of the K-2 with high school age youth. These articles have been focused on parent education, and addressing the dangers of the unknown involved with the K-2 and Spice products. The purpose of both the prescription drug and K-2 articles is to raise parent awareness of the new trends, with an effort to educate parents and school officials of the dangers associated with prescription drugs and the K-2 products. Positive feedback has been received from these newspapers articles.

The MAN Unit was involved in the following successful investigations in 2010:

- In June, the MAN Unit concluded a nine-month investigation resulting in the indictment of 63 individuals on 232 drug-related charges involving the sales of cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy, marijuana, and methamphetamine as well as several prescription medications including Oxycontin, Vicodin, Soma, Flexeril, Darvocet, oxymorphone, Xanax, morphine and ketamine. Several individuals were also charged with Child Endangering due to children being present during the time the drugs were being sold. Twelve individuals were charged under RICO (Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity). These charges resulted from the individuals’ involvement in transporting crack cocaine into the Defiance area from Detroit and Toledo and selling the crack cocaine out of several residences. Five vehicles were also seized during the round-up. This was the largest number of persons involved in one round-up conducted by the MAN Unit since it was established in 1990.
- In August, 25 persons were indicted in Putnam County resulting from an undercover operation with the majority of the cases involving the sales of heroin. The individuals were bringing the drugs into Putnam County and sold the drugs to a confidential informant. Drugs sold to this confidential informant also included cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy and Oxycontin. These indictments ended an eight-month investigation involving residents of Putnam, Hancock, Wood, Henry and Allen counties.

MEDWAY Drug Enforcement Agency

The Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit had a very busy year. The task force promoted Operation Safe Return to allow citizens to drop off unwanted/outdated prescription medications. The task force set up collection sites on five different dates in 2010 and collected 799 pounds of medications.

The Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit has been fortunate to be a part of five local coalition groups. By being a part of the coalition groups the task force has been able to provide educational talks and get the word out about prescription drug abuse.

The task force also joined forces with the Holmes County Health Commissioner in presentations to local healthcare officials. In 2009, the task force was involved in 27 presentations, and in 2010, the number of presentations increased to 58 throughout a three-county area. A vital part of those presentations is educating physicians as to how to identify “doctor shoppers” and how to use OARRS.

The task force is in the process of setting up two permanent sites where residents will have the ability to come and drop off unwanted and outdated prescription drugs anytime.

During 2010, the task force saw a significant increase in requests to provide drug awareness and drug identification presentations. Presentations were made to numerous schools and several professional associations. Presentations were also given to fire departments regarding the illegal manufacturing of methamphetamine and the dangers related to such activities. The task force was involved in presentations to approximately 450 members of the Amish community of both Wayne and Holmes counties during spring of 2010.

Northern Ohio Law Enforcement Task Force (NOLETF)

During 2010, the NOLETF continued its practice of assisting local non-member agencies. In two cases, this resulted in the non-member agencies joining the NOLETF on a full-time permanent basis. The first case involved heroin imported to the United States from Afghanistan through Lagos, Nigeria, then to the greater Cleveland area.

Ottawa County Regional Task Force

The Ottawa County Task Force engaged in a federal drug conspiracy case that resulted in cash seizures of \$458,404.00 from targets in the conspiracy.

Southeast Area Law Enforcement (SEALE)

The task force is in the process of starting a K-9 storage facility interdiction team. Intelligence indicates that an increasing number of drug dealers are using these facilities to hide valuable assets as well as drugs and money. Participating K-9 handlers would report back to the Southeast Area Task Force with

storage units suspected of containing contraband. The task force would investigate further by consulting with management and subpoena pertinent renter and lease information. Depending on factors such as suspect rental information, criminal history, frequency of visits, pre-existing renters and surveillance, the task force may or may not choose to obtain a search warrant for the premises.

Stark County Metro Narcotics

The task force continues to collaborate with other agencies on investigations and has recently joined forces with the Canton PD vice unit to stop the flow of heroin into the jurisdiction. Task force investigators have made several purchases and hope to indict several of the key dealers in this area.

Summit County Drug Unit

The Summit County Drug Unit highlighted several successful investigations.

- ***Internet Sales of Methamphetamine Producing Chemicals.*** In June 2010, investigators from the Summit County Drug Unit and the DEA concluded a two-year investigation pertaining to the Internet trafficking of methamphetamine manufacturing-related chemicals as well as illicit pseudoephedrine sales, assembly of chemicals and manufacturing.

As the investigation progressed, co-conspirators were identified. These individuals were found to be purchasing pseudoephedrine at Wal-Mart stores throughout Summit, Stark, Portage and Medina counties. Investigators noted that these purchases often occurred on the same day and within the same time sequences.

The investigation further revealed that one of the conspirators opened an account at a Medina county supply company. Purchase of iodine on this account was tied to the group's pseudoephedrine purchases, often on the same day and within the same time sequences.

All the conspirators have been indicted in the United States Court for the Northeastern District of Ohio. Investigators are currently forwarding information and intelligence throughout the United States to agencies where iodine sales took place.

- ***Operation Grapevine.*** In January 2008, investigators learned of a Mexican-influenced multi-kilogram drug trafficking organization (DTO) operating in the Akron/Summit County area. Throughout 2008, investigators continued to gather information and intelligence pertaining to the DTO.

In April 2009, a homicide occurred in Akron as the result of the theft of United States currency from a high ranking member of the DTO. In June, investigators received authorization for a T-III on a mid-level distributor of the DTO. Investigators determined that the source of supply (SOS) for the DTO was a Mexican national operating in and about the Denver, Colorado area. In August, investigators learned that the SOS was interdicted by Iowa State Police en route to the area of

Akron/Summit County. Iowa State troopers found four kilograms of cocaine concealed in the radiator of the truck occupied by the SOS.

Investigators continued to investigate the DTO and learned that members of the DTO had arranged for a shipment of cocaine from the SOS organization. Investigators utilizing GPS technology and surveillance techniques located and arrested the local top level member of the DTO along with the courier. Investigators found eight kilograms of cocaine stashed inside a false radiator of the vehicle driven by the courier. The cocaine was separated by alternating layers of stones to allow air flow to continue. Intelligence information determined that the SOS was directly linked to the drug trafficking cartel operating in and about the State of Michoacán, Mexico.

This organization was disrupted as a result of the interdiction of the high ranking member and the SOS courier. Throughout 2010 investigators note that the local Akron/Summit County organization remains viable and the task force's investigation is continuing.

Trumbull-Ashtabula Group (TAG) Law Enforcement Task Force

The TAG Law Enforcement Task Force received a 2010 Investigative Excellence award from the Mahoning Valley Chiefs of Police Association. During 2010, TAG initiated or participated in the following successful activities and investigations:

- TAG held three Operation Medicine Cabinet prescription drug disposal events throughout the year.
- After a six-month investigation, the task force disrupted the supply of a local drug chain possibly linked to a larger Mexican operation. Nearly 50 pounds of marijuana, with an estimated street value of \$100,000, were seized. The investigation resulted in two arrests.
- In October, the task force helped to coordinate a city-wide saturation patrol to address gun violence (VGRIP) in Warren, involving multiple federal, state, and local agencies. The three-day effort resulted in 11 felony drug arrests and two misdemeanor arrests by TAG, 28 felony arrests and seven misdemeanor arrests by U.S. Marshals, three felony, six OVI and multiple traffic-related arrests and summons by the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Seizures related to these efforts included approximately 3.5 ounces of cocaine, over 6.5 grams of crack, marijuana, drug paraphernalia, four firearms, and over \$3,000.00.

Westshore Enforcement Bureau (WEB)

On November 19th 2010 the first annual day-long leadership training was held with over 50 individuals including police officers, counselors, teachers, school administrators and middle and high school students in attendance. During the leadership training, students were given the opportunity to generate a list of drug-free activities and events that they would like to host for Westshore High School and middle school students during the school year.

The first event held was an overnight lock-in at the Westlake Recreation Center on February 25th. High School Students from Bay Village, Lakewood, North Olmsted and Westlake participated in a variety of

activities at the recreation center. Parents, community volunteers, police officers along with WEB staff chaperoned the event to insure the safety for all present.

The intention of the Westshore Young Leaders Network is that through hosting drug-free activities and events for Westshore teens, membership will increase and the incidence of alcohol and drug abuse and crime associated with a drug oriented lifestyle will decrease in the community.