



For Immediate Release
April 6, 2007

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PILL SHOPPING INVESTIGATION RESULTS IN MAJOR METH-RELATED ARRESTS IN IROQUOIS COUNTY

Madigan's Office, Illinois State Police Methamphetamine Response Team and Iroquois County State's Attorney's Office Utilize New Legislation in Crack Down

Chicago – A collaborative 18-month investigation into the manufacture of methamphetamine has resulted in the arrest of 20 individuals – predominantly Iroquois County residents – accused of purchasing pills containing pseudoephedrine to aid in the illegal manufacture of methamphetamine. Pseudoephedrine is the active ingredient in methamphetamine.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Master Sergeant Scott Koerner of the Illinois State Police (ISP) Methamphetamine Response Team for Zone 3 (MRT-3), and Iroquois County State's Attorney James Devine today announced the recent indictment and arrest of the group following the ISP investigation that uncovered major purchases of ingredients required to manufacture methamphetamine.

The officials credited recently enacted legislation that Madigan's office drafted – the Methamphetamine Control and Community Protection Act and the Methamphetamine Precursor Control Act (MPCA) – as essential factors in their ability to bring charges against the alleged pill shoppers.

The new MPCA was designed to fight the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine by requiring registration of purchases of "precursors" or the basic ingredients used to make meth. From the registration logs, police were able to track patterns of purchases, which led them to believe the pills were intended for the manufacture of methamphetamine.

"The serial purchases of basic ingredients intended for use by meth makers is precisely what the law was designed to target," said Attorney General Madigan. "It has already been pivotal in the efforts of police to track down and arrest makers of methamphetamine."

Six individuals were indicted and charged earlier in the investigation with additional arrests coming after the unsealing of indictments returned on February 8 and March 8, 2007 by Madigan's office's Statewide Grand Jury and by the Iroquois County Grand Jury on March 8, 2007.

Those indicted and charged earlier in the investigation were Curtis E. Riston, 43, of Bradley; Jessica L. Patterson, 20, Daniel J. Caswell, 25, Sheila Jeffers, 44, and Robert Michael Quinlan, 54, all of Milford; as well as Thomas Kusman, 28 and David Fowler, 34 both of Watseka.

Recent arrests and indictments were brought against Timothy Deaton, 22; Daniel J. Hart, 21; Christopher R. Hollis, 19; Carl Wayne Keeling, 25; Pierson D. Lazarov, 29; Lequita Richards, 58 and Jamie N. Williams, 23 - all of Milford; Paula Renee Espinoza, 33 of Hoopeston; Leslie A. Musgraves, 37 of Woodland; and Tonya Patlan, 27; Amy R. Pentecost, 21; Charles Sam Gregory, Jr., 55; and Misty R. Kottke, 27 – all of Watseka.

Depending on the specific charges against them, the arrested individuals face assorted charges of violating one, two, or three of the following offenses: Methamphetamine Conspiracy, Procurement of a Methamphetamine Precursor, and Unlawful Purchase of a Targeted Methamphetamine Precursor. All of the above-named individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The recent arrests and indictments were carried out in coordination with the Watseka Police Department and the Iroquois County Sheriff's Department.

“Sheriff Sprau and Chief Lebeck do not want to see meth in their communities anymore than we do,” said ISP Master Sergeant Scott Koerner. “Hopefully, we can continue to have an impact.” State police emphasized that the investigation was still on going.

Assisting in the arrests were members of the Kankakee Metropolitan Enforcement Group, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Milford Police Department.

Iroquois County Assistant State's Attorney Alex O'Brien and Assistant Attorney General Grant Swinger of Madigan's Statewide Grand Jury Bureau are prosecuting the case. The Office of Kankakee County State's Attorney John Boyd and Vermilion County State's Attorney Frank Young are also providing support in the case.

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