



February 22, 2012

MADIGAN: SYNTHETIC DRUG BUST CONDUCTED IN PEORIA COUNTY

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced investigators from her office conducted an “Operation Smoked Out” undercover bust in Peoria County that resulted in the relinquishing of 683 packages of bath salts and synthetic marijuana from local retailers. Madigan said the surrendered products carry a street value of \$10,059.

“These operations are intended to put retailers on notice that synthetic drugs are illegal and have no business being sold in Illinois stores,” said Attorney General Madigan.

Madigan announced the results of the operation today in Peoria, joined by Peoria County Sheriff Michael McCoy, State’s Attorney Gerald W. Brady Jr., and Peoria Police Chief Steven Settingsgaard.

Peoria county and municipal authorities joined investigators from the Attorney General’s office in a sweep at the following locations:

- Western Fuel Mart, 1016 S. Western Ave., – 228 packages relinquished;
- Lincoln Food Mart, 1901 W. Lincoln, – 15 packages relinquished; and
- Excessive Colors, 416 W. Main St., – 440 packages relinquished.

Today’s operation is part of Madigan’s “Operation Smoke Out.” Investigators have conducted undercover sweeps at retailers in Adams, Bond, Grundy and Vermilion counties, as well as in the Southern Illinois cities of Pinckneyville and Centralia.

The store sweeps are part of Madigan’s ongoing effort to address the growing use of synthetic drugs, particularly among teens and young adults. Poison Control Centers across the country have reported a dramatic increase in calls about synthetic marijuana and “bath salts,” another type of synthetic drug that contains chemical compounds that mimic the effects of cocaine or methamphetamine. In 2010, Poison Control Centers nationwide received 2,915 calls related to synthetic marijuana use. That figure jumped to 6,890 calls in 2011. Reports of bath salts were made 303 times to Poison Control Centers in 2010. A year later, the centers received 6,072 calls about bath salts.

States, including Illinois, initially responded to the rise of synthetic drug use by passing laws that banned specific formulas of synthetic marijuana and bath salts. Drug makers attempted to sidestep these laws by replacing the banned chemicals with new formulas. A new Illinois law that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, takes a broader approach and bans all chemicals that are structural derivatives of the previously banned chemicals.

Prior to that law going into effect, Attorney General Madigan hosted the first-ever statewide emergency summit in November 2011 in Springfield to help increase awareness about synthetic drug use among state, county and local law enforcement officers as well as educators, health care professionals and parents.

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