



## Press Releases

March 8, 2012

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN, CHRISTIAN COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS CONFISCATE THOUSANDS OF SYNTHETIC DRUGS**

#### ***Four Retailers Give Up Over \$52,000 in Illegal Synthetic Drugs***

**Chicago** —Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced today that Christian County was the latest stop in her ongoing “Operation Smoked Out” initiative aimed at ridding illegal synthetic drugs from Illinois stores. A total of 1,743 packages of products worth \$52,732 were relinquished by four retailers this week in Taylorville and Kincaid.

“We are putting retailers on notice that law enforcement agencies throughout the state are committed to getting these illegal drugs off store shelves,” Attorney General Madigan said.

Taylorville Police, Christian County Sheriff’s Department and the Central Illinois Enforcement Group joined investigators from Madigan’s office in the sweeps to determine if retailers were selling banned synthetic marijuana products.

“This is another example of agencies coming together for the good of the citizens,” said Brian Hile, deputy chief of police. “Our agency has responded to numerous calls involving subjects who have overdosed, who are very violent and who have experienced other medical reactions to the synthetic cannabis.”

#### **Taylorville**

- Route Mart, 120 W. Park St. – 88 packages relinquished;
- Amity Food Mart, 630 W. Spesser – 800 packages relinquished;
- First Class Liquors, 101 S. Walnut – 392 packages relinquished.

#### **Kincaid**

- Kincaid Phillips 66, 400 Springfield Road – 463 packages relinquished.

“Christian County, along with many other counties, has experienced an extreme increase in the sale and use of synthetic drugs. Law enforcement is doing everything possible to combat this serious problem, but we need help from the public. I ask anyone who knows of any business selling these items to report it to law enforcement authorities, and then boycott that business until they stop selling these very dangerous drugs,” said Christian County Sheriff Bruce Kettelkamp.

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.

In November 2011, Attorney General Madigan hosted the first-ever statewide emergency summit to help increase awareness among state, county and local law enforcement officers of synthetic drug use as well as educators, health care professionals and parents. Since the summit, Madigan’s office has conducted numerous workshops with prosecutors and law enforcement personnel statewide.

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 takes a broader approach and bans all chemicals that are structural derivatives of the previously-banned chemicals.

Currently awaiting action by the Illinois Senate, a bill drafted by Madigan's office, HB 5233, targets the retail sale of synthetic drugs by defining a "synthetic drug product" as one that contains a controlled substance not regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. The bill also addresses the fact that these drugs are sold in packages with misleading labels claiming the products are legal. The bill further makes it illegal under the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act to sell these drugs and significantly increases the penalty for selling synthetic or misbranded drugs.

-30-

[Return to March 2012 Press Releases](#)



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