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**MADIGAN: ILLEGAL SYNTHETIC DRUGS REMOVED FROM CARPENTERSVILLE STORES**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan reported today that two Carpentersville retailers relinquished nearly \$8,000 of illegal synthetic drugs as part of "Operation Smoked Out," a statewide initiative aimed at ridding the dangerous substances from Illinois retail stores. In all, 448 packages of synthetic drugs were handed over to law enforcement officials.

"Synthetic drug use has grown rapidly in Illinois, particularly among teens and young adults," Madigan said. "These store visits are part of our ongoing effort to spread awareness about the extreme danger these drugs pose and to send a message to community retailers that these illegal substances have no business being sold in their establishments."

Investigators from Madigan's office joined Carpentersville police to check the inventory at two locations. Illegal products were located and relinquished at:

- Buddeez Smoke Shop – 3 N. Washington – 356 packages – street value: \$6,936;
- Egor's – 2 Wisconsin St. – 92 packages – street value: \$994.

"We were proud to partner with the Attorney General's office today on this important law enforcement detail," Police Chief Alan Popp said. "The timing couldn't have come at a better time because, unfortunately, this is a growing problem in our community and others throughout the region."

The rise of synthetic drug use can be seen in the dramatic increase in calls to poison control centers across the country about synthetic marijuana and "bath salts," which are another form of synthetic drugs that contain 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. Bath salt-related calls skyrocketed from 303 in 2010 to 6,072 in 2011.

Attorney General Madigan has been working on many fronts to increase awareness of the dangers of synthetic drugs in Illinois. In November 2011, the Attorney General hosted the first-ever statewide emergency summit with state, county and local law enforcement officers, educators, health care professionals and parents to talk about the growing use of synthetic drugs. Since then, Madigan's office has conducted numerous workshops with prosecutors and law enforcement personnel throughout Illinois.

In conjunction with "Operation Smoked Out," Madigan has proposed a bill that would crack down on the retail sale of synthetic drugs. House Bill 5233 would define a "synthetic drug product" as one that contains a controlled substance not regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. The bill, which is awaiting final legislative action, also addresses the fact that these drugs are sold in packages with misleading labels claiming the products are legal. The bill makes it illegal under the Illinois Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act to sell these drugs and significantly increases the penalty for doing so.

Many 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 slightly different formulas. A recent 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. Madigan's legislation would complement this current measure.

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