
Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 14, 2018



CONTACTS: Faribault Chief Andy Bohlen
Le Sueur County Sheriff Brett Mason
Northfield Police Chief Monte Nelson
Rice County Sheriff Troy Dunn
Dispatch: (507)334-4305

CANNON RIVER DRUG & VIOLENT OFFENDER TASK FORCE SEIZE RECORD AMOUNT OF METHAMPHETAMINE

FARIBAULT – Agents of the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force (CRDVOTF) seized 170.98 pounds of methamphetamine in Minneapolis on Tuesday, September 11th. This is believed to be the largest methamphetamine single seizure in state history.

An ongoing methamphetamine trafficking investigation began in January 2018, originating within the task force jurisdiction. This investigation led agents to a residence in the 3600 block of Dupont Avenue North in Minneapolis. Investigation and surveillance provided agents with information to obtain a search warrant for the residence. Working with Minneapolis Police and Department of Homeland Security agents, a search warrant was obtained and executed with the assistance of Minneapolis Police SWAT team. Five adults and three children were found at the residence. Agents discovered 39 packages, each containing approximately two kilograms (4.4 pounds) of methamphetamine as well as additional smaller packages of methamphetamine. A sawed-off shotgun, 1.1 ounces of tar heroin and several thousand dollars in suspected drug cash were also seized.

Four males were arrested and charged in Hennepin County District Court:

Fernando Ramos Meza, age 33

Peter Martin, age 34

Javier Lopez, age 46

Juan Daniel Valdez Mendoza, age 23

As the supply of methamphetamine has increased, the price has dropped to approximately \$4,000 per pound, down from \$15,000 to \$20,000 just 10 years ago. This seizure alone could sell wholesale for approximately \$684,000. When the seized drugs are broken down into \$100/gram for street level sales, the value would be over \$7,750,000. According to Statewide Gang and Drug Coordinator Brian Marquardt, this country lost 72,000 Americans to drug overdose deaths and this seizure of 171 pounds of methamphetamine will have a significant impact on protecting the citizens of Minnesota.

Faribault Police Chief / Violent Crime Coordinating Council chair Andy Bohlen commented, "Methamphetamine is still big business in Minnesota and Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) bring meth to

major metropolitan hubs like Chicago and Minneapolis then break down the product for mid-level dealers. Eventually the drug continues to spread and ends up in all communities across the State. I want to thank the Minnesota Office of Public Safety and the Office of Justice Programs that support these collaborative Violent Crime Enforcement Teams across our State and the hard work done by each team every day to keep our communities safe.”

Rice County Sheriff/CRDVOTF chair Troy Dunn commented, “Our officers and deputies on the task force did an outstanding job during this investigation. They continued to work leads in an attempt to locate sources of these drugs that come back into our communities. These agents worked extremely hard in this case, which resulted in this significant seizure and multiple arrests. We also appreciate and thank the Minneapolis Police Department SWAT team, the Homeland Security Investigations unit, and the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office for their assistance.”

The Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force covers Rice and Le Sueur Counties, and consists of agents from the Rice County and Le Sueur County Sheriff’s Offices and the Faribault and Northfield Police Departments. The team combined the two counties and was re-established in 2017.

