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## Media Release

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **CRDVOTF “Operation Sound of Silence” Targets Drug Dealers Affecting Local Communities**

Agents with the Cannon River Drug and Violent Offender Task Force are nearing completion of several month-long investigations which targeted felony level drug dealers. This operation was conducted with hopes of holding drug dealers accountable for negatively affecting communities in Rice and Le Sueur Counties. Agents have been targeting large scale distributors of opioids, methamphetamine, cocaine, and other narcotics in hopes of preventing further overdose deaths and to remove violent criminals from our neighborhoods thus, making our community safer.

The investigation, called “Operation Sound of Silence”, stands for the task force’s effort to silence the criminal element in our area communities. Operation SOS was conducted June 2018 through October 2018 including some additional longer-term investigations. All in all, Agents have charged or will be charging very soon 63 persons, each for felony level-controlled substance sales. Approximately half of the 63 charged have previous felony convictions or have been previously charged for controlled substance crimes. Multiple Federal indictments have also resulted from this operation. An additional 40 persons came in contact with agents during the operation and they were charged with a variety of other crimes.

During the course of this operation, agents have recovered approximately 200 pounds of methamphetamine, over 10 pounds of heroin, over one and a half pounds of cocaine, and numerous other illicit drugs such as prescription pills and hallucinogens. In addition, multiple firearms have been seized including two sawed off shotguns and one suspected submachine gun. The value of the drug seizures is estimated to have a street value of over 10 million dollars.



operation, agents came in contact with numerous children whom were exposed ons. As a result, the children were removed from their unsafe living conditions and provided additional assistance from area child protection services.

The CRDVOTF consists of four agents, a drug task force commander, and one administrative support person. The team serves both Rice and Le Sueur Counties and will continue to work diligently to hold drug and violent offenders accountable.

-Press release completed and submitted by the CRDVOTF Commander on 10/31/2018.

Some area law enforcement and county attorney representatives provided additional comments about Operation SOS:

-Faribault Police Chief Andy Bohlen commented, "I know the area Chiefs and Sheriffs are all extremely proud of the team's extraordinary efforts. The impact of this hard-working task force is literally saving lives and making our communities safer."

- "The Task Force has kept us busy, doubling our drug case workload from 80 cases in 2014 to 178 in 2016," John Fossum, Rice County Attorney said. "We know that the hard work they did will pay off in making the community safer, and my office will work hard to see an appropriate result in the dozens of new files as result of this operation"

- "With the dramatic increase in drug cases coming through our office, it is readily apparent the positive impact the task force is having on our communities by taking drug dealers off the streets. The Le Sueur County Attorney's office looks forward to continue working with the task force in furthering this objective." -Brent Christian, Le Sueur County Attorney; Ben King, Jason Moran, Assistant Le Sueur County Attorney's- members.

- CRDVOTF Commander Dave Dillon commented, "The task force is committed to providing a high level of service to the citizens we serve in Rice and Le Sueur counties. Our main focus is to remove mid to upper level drug dealers who are responsible for spreading this poison onto our streets which is negatively impacting the quality of life for our children and law-abiding citizens."