Just the Facts

March 8, 2019
Volume 10, Issue 10

Statewide Drug Seizures on the Rise—

Drug seizures for Minnesota’s Violent Crime Enforcement Teams (VCETs) increased in several major drug categories in 2018. VCETs, which are partially funded by the Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs (DPS-OJP), are multijurisdictional task forces that investigate narcotics, gangs and violent crime. VCETs have increased their efforts to identify major drug traffickers, focusing on high-level dealers and suppliers. Locally, the South Central Drug Investigation Unit (SCDIU) is the VCET tasked with major drug investigations in Owatonna and Steele County. The SCDIU also serves the Waseca, Freeborn and Faribault Counties and the cities within those counties. The SCDIU is headquartered out of the Owatonna Police Department and the OPD contributes the commander, an agent and an administrative assistant who serves as a fiscal coordinator and evidence officer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine (Pounds)</td>
<td>223.46</td>
<td>230.32</td>
<td>487.71</td>
<td>624.5</td>
<td>1145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription (Pills)</td>
<td>18,398</td>
<td>17,717</td>
<td>58,578</td>
<td>214,429</td>
<td>16,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hash or Marijuana Wax (Pounds)</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>27.49</td>
<td>34.72</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>160,22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin (Pounds)</td>
<td>12.27</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>42.23</td>
<td>24.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana (Pounds)</td>
<td>1,269.26</td>
<td>2,268.92</td>
<td>2,194.11</td>
<td>4,323.4</td>
<td>2,675</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cocaine (Pounds)</td>
<td>11.55</td>
<td>12.89</td>
<td>37.43</td>
<td>35.65</td>
<td>59.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crack (Pounds)</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total pill seizures in 2017 included at least one significant seizure of nearly 200,000.

Gold Theft—

On February 26th, an Owatonna officer investigated a theft being reported by Black Forest. Black Forest was reporting that they had been contacted by a local jeweler that a male had been selling scrap gold believed to have come from Black Forest. A Black Forest employee was able to identify the scrap as coming from rings manufactured by Black Forest. Through Facebook, it was learned the suspect selling the scrap was a friend to a Black Forest employee. Officers interviewed the employee who admitted to taking approximately 100 pieces of scrap gold in the past year and having his friend, John, sell it to the jeweler. The employee, Harley, was subsequently arrested. Officers interviewed the friend John who admitted to selling the gold, that it was stolen and confirmed he had been doing it for the past year. John was subsequently arrested and jailed. In total, the jeweler had paid $1,240 for the gold that was valued at $4,386. Harley L. Norberg, age 63 of Owatonna, has been charged with Theft and 5th Degree Possess[ion] of a Controlled Substance—he was in possession of methamphetamine at the time of his arrest. John C. Eppel, age 51 of Owatonna, has been charged with Receiving Stolen Property and Aid[ing] and Abet[ting] Theft.

Spring Ahead—

Daylight Savings

Time kicks in Sunday, March 10th at 2:00 AM. Remember to spring your clock one hour forward!!

Fallen Officers

Sergeant Steve Hinkle
Sullivan County (TN) Sheriff’s Office
End of Watch: February 26, 2019
Sergeant Hinkle succumbed to gunshot wounds he sustained three days earlier during a wellness check at a residence. Sergeant Hinkle is the 11th law enforcement officer to be shot and killed this year and the second officer fatally shot from the state of Tennessee in 2019.

Police Officer
Nathan H. Heidelberg
Midland (TX) Police Department
End of Watch: March 5, 2019
Police Officer Nathan Hugely Heidelberg was shot and killed as he and other officers responded to a hostage situation at a residence. Officer Heidelberg is the 7th law enforcement officer to be shot and killed this year and the second officer fatally shot from the state of Texas in 2019.

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