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Arkansas

Drug Threat Assessment



National Drug Intelligence Center
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Arkansas Drug Threat Assessment

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Preface

This report is a strategic assessment that addresses the status and outlook of the drug threat to Arkansas. Analytical judgment determined the threat posed by each drug type or category, taking into account the most current quantitative and qualitative information on availability, demand, production or cultivation, transportation, and distribution, as well as the effects of a particular drug on abusers and society as a whole. While NDIC sought to incorporate the latest available information, a time lag often exists between collection and publication of data, particularly demand-related data sets. NDIC anticipates that this drug threat assessment will be useful to policymakers, law enforcement personnel, and treatment providers at the federal, state, and local levels because it draws upon a broad range of information sources to describe and analyze the drug threat to Arkansas.

Arkansas Drug Threat Assessment

Executive Summary

The production, distribution, and abuse of illicit drugs pose a serious threat to Arkansas. Little Rock is the primary market area in the state and also serves as a transit point for drugs being transported to other states. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and distribution of most illicit drugs throughout Arkansas. Local independent dealers, street gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs also distribute drugs in the state.

Methamphetamine is a principal drug threat to Arkansas, primarily because of the drug's ready availability and the violence and environmental harm that often result from methamphetamine production and abuse. Methamphetamine produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico, California, and southwestern states is widely available in Arkansas. Methamphetamine produced in the state, generally by Caucasian local independent producers, also is available. Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters and wholesale distributors of methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states. Local independent producers control the transportation and distribution of the methamphetamine they produce within the state. Mexican criminal groups, Caucasian local independent dealers, street gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs distribute methamphetamine at the retail level throughout Arkansas.

Cocaine, particularly crack, poses a significant threat to Arkansas because it is readily available, highly addictive, and frequently associated with violent crime. Powdered cocaine is available throughout most of the state, while crack cocaine primarily is available in the larger cities. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation of powdered cocaine into Arkansas, smuggling the drug from Mexico through California and southwestern states to Arkansas primarily in private and commercial vehicles. These groups also dominate wholesale powdered cocaine distribution throughout the state. African American street gangs and local independent dealers also distribute some powdered cocaine at the wholesale level. African American street gangs and local independent dealers are the primary distributors of powdered and crack cocaine at the retail level. Mexican criminal groups also distribute powdered cocaine at the retail level, but to a lesser extent. African American street gangs and local independent dealers typically convert powdered cocaine into crack for retail distribution at or near distribution sites.

Retail cocaine distribution commonly occurs on street corners, in bars, and at private residences and is facilitated by the use of pagers, pay phones, and cellular telephones.

Marijuana is the most widely available and frequently abused illicit drug in Arkansas. Most of the marijuana available in the state is produced in Mexico, although some cannabis is cultivated locally. Mexican criminal groups, local independent dealers, and street gangs transport marijuana into Arkansas in private and commercial vehicles. Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary wholesale- and retail-level marijuana distributors in the state. Street gangs also distribute marijuana at the retail level. Marijuana typically is distributed at the retail level from bars, strip clubs, schools, parking lots, residences, businesses, and at concerts.

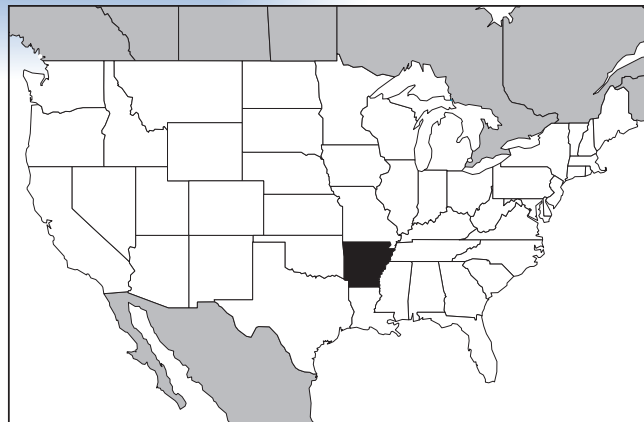
Other dangerous drugs pose varying threats to Arkansas. Other dangerous drugs include the club drugs MDMA, GHB and its analogs, LSD, and Rohypnol; the hallucinogen psilocybin; inhalants; and diverted pharmaceuticals including hydrocodone (Lortab, Lorcet, Vicodin), oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), codeine, and benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax). Club drugs and psilocybin are transported into Arkansas in private vehicles, by couriers aboard commercial aircraft, and via package delivery services. Many of these drugs are distributed and abused by middle-class, suburban young adults and college students at raves, nightclubs, and on college campuses. Inhalant abusers, primarily adolescents, inhale chemical vapors from a variety of substances, many of which are common household products. Diverted pharmaceuticals generally are obtained throughout the state by diversion techniques including improper prescribing practices, prescription forgery, and “doctor shopping.”

Heroin poses a low threat to Arkansas. Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin are available on a limited basis, primarily in the larger cities in the state such as Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Little Rock, and West Memphis. Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of heroin into Arkansas. Local Caucasian independent distributors also transport heroin into Arkansas to a limited extent. Heroin generally is not distributed at the wholesale level in the state. Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of heroin.

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Arkansas Drug Threat Assessment



Arkansas.

Note: This map displays features mentioned in the report.



Arkansas

Drug Threat Assessment

Overview

Arkansas is the thirty-third most populous state in the nation with more than 2.6 million residents. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2000 the population of Arkansas was 80 percent Caucasian and 15.7 percent African American; the remaining 4.3 percent are another race or more than one race. Individuals of Hispanic or Latino descent account for 3.2 percent of the population.

The Hispanic population in Arkansas has increased significantly since 1990. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population in Arkansas increased 148 percent from 1990 to 2000. Increasing employment opportunities in poultry packing plants have resulted in an influx of Hispanic immigrants—primarily Mexican nationals—to Arkansas. Legal and illegal Mexican immigrants seek employment in an increasing number of labor-intensive industries and sometimes are recruited by Mexican criminal groups to transport illicit drugs into Arkansas for distribution.

Arkansas is predominantly rural, with approximately 44,000 farms covering nearly half the state. Livestock products provide about 60 percent of the state's agricultural income, while crops such as rice and soybeans account for the remainder. The state also has considerable forestland including the Ouachita National Forest and the Ozark National Forest.

Fast Facts

Arkansas

Population (2000)	2,673,400
U.S. population ranking	33rd
Median household income (2001)	\$33,339
Unemployment rate (2001)	4.4%
Land area	52,068 square miles
Capital	Little Rock
Other principal cities	Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Jonesboro, North Little Rock, Pine Bluff, Springdale
Number of counties	75
Principal industries	Agriculture, manufacturing, services

Despite the state’s rural nature, Arkansas has a well-developed transportation infrastructure that facilitates the movement of both licit and illicit goods. Private and commercial vehicles commonly are used to transport drugs into and through Arkansas. To varying extents, drugs also are transported into Arkansas via package delivery services; couriers aboard buses, passenger rail, and commercial aircraft; and cargo on freight rail and commercial shipping vessels.

The highways in Arkansas are used to facilitate the transportation and distribution of illicit drugs. Interstate 40, the principal east-west highway in Arkansas, traverses the southern portion of the United States, linking Arkansas to California in the west and North Carolina in the east. Interstate 30 originates in Fort Worth, Texas, passes through Dallas, and terminates in Little Rock. Interstate 55, which intersects with I-40 in the northeast section of the state, extends north from Louisiana (near New Orleans) to Chicago. Drug traffickers, primarily Mexican criminal groups, commonly use these interstates to transport illegal drugs into and throughout the state. In doing so, drug traffickers primarily use private and commercial vehicles. Couriers aboard buses also are used, but to a much lesser extent.

Two of the busiest highway cargo inspection and weigh stations in the United States are located in Hope and West Memphis. The Hope Inspection Station, located along I-30, processes commercial traffic from southwestern states, and the West Memphis Inspection Station, located at the intersection of I-40 and I-55, processes all commercial traffic crossing the Mississippi River through Memphis. Arkansas Highway Police estimate that each year approximately 2 million trucks enter the Hope Inspection Station and approximately 3 million trucks enter the West Memphis Inspection Station. Drug traffickers typically intermingle drugs with legitimate cargo or place the drugs inside hidden compartments. In February 2003 Arkansas Highway Police in Crittenden County seized 35 pounds of marijuana from a truck loaded with auto parts at the West Memphis Weigh Station on I-40 and arrested the driver who

was transporting the drugs from Tennessee to Michigan. According to Arkansas Highway Police, the truck was stopped for a safety inspection.

Passenger and freight rail systems also are vulnerable to the transportation of illicit drugs into and through Arkansas. AMTRAK, the nation’s largest passenger rail service, operates a route that extends north from Little Rock to Chicago and southwest to San Antonio. In addition, there are 3 major and 21 minor freight carriers operating on more than 2,700 miles of railroad track within the state. In 2001 Arkansas ranked tenth in the United States in the number of freight railroads operating within the state (24), twenty-ninth in the total number of rail miles (2,607), and twenty-first in the amount of rail cargo (150.2 million tons) carried within the state. Since only a small percentage of railcars are inspected, it is difficult to assess the extent to which railcars are used to transport drugs into Arkansas.

One national airport—Little Rock National Airport—services Arkansas. It provides nonstop service to destinations throughout the United States including eight international airports. Regional airports in El Dorado, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Harrison, Highfill, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, and Texarkana also service Arkansas, providing commercial passenger service to several national and international airports. There also are approximately 100 public-use airports and hundreds of remote airstrips scattered throughout the state. Operation Jetway data indicate that illicit drugs have been transported into the state on aircraft from Dallas, San Antonio, and Los Angeles; however, drug seizures from aircraft are infrequent.

Operation Jetway

Operation Jetway is a domestic interdiction program supported by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). Drug seizures are reported to Operation Jetway by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies across the nation at airports, train stations, bus stations, package shipment facilities, U.S. Post Offices, and airport hotels and motels.

Illicit drugs also are transported into and through the state along its two major waterways, the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers. Approximately 200 million tons of commodities pass through the state via the Mississippi River each year. The Arkansas River bisects the state and flows into the Mississippi River at the state's southeastern border. The Port of Little Rock is situated on the Arkansas River and serves as the state's primary commercial port.

Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters and wholesale distributors of methamphetamine, powdered cocaine, marijuana, and heroin throughout Arkansas. They obtain these drugs from Mexican criminal groups operating in Mexico, California, and southwestern states. These groups primarily transport these drugs into the state in private and commercial vehicles on I-30 and I-40, according to law enforcement authorities in Arkansas. In addition to Mexican nationals, Mexican criminal groups often employ a variety of individuals—including Caucasians and African Americans—to transport drugs in order to deter suspicion by law enforcement authorities. Other illicit drugs including club drugs and hallucinogens are transported into Arkansas in private vehicles, by couriers aboard commercial aircraft, and via package delivery services.

Mexican criminal groups, local independent dealers, street gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) are the principal retail drug distributors in Arkansas. Mexican criminal groups distribute methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states, powdered cocaine, Mexico-produced marijuana, and Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin at the retail level. Local independent dealers distribute methamphetamine, powdered and crack cocaine, marijuana, and heroin. Street gangs are retail distributors of methamphetamine, powdered and crack cocaine, and marijuana. OMGs distribute retail-level quantities of methamphetamine. Club drugs and hallucinogens are distributed and abused by middle-class, suburban young adults and college students at raves, nightclubs, and on college campuses. Diverted pharmaceuticals generally are obtained throughout the state by diversion techniques including improper prescribing practices, prescription forgery, and "doctor shopping."

Drug-related admissions to publicly funded treatment facilities in Arkansas increased from state fiscal year (SFY) 1998 (July 1 through June 30) through SFY2002. According to the Arkansas Department of Health, treatment admissions for abuse of amphetamines, powdered cocaine, and marijuana increased from SFY1998 through SFY2002, while admissions for crack cocaine and heroin decreased. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Drug-Related Treatment Admissions, Arkansas, SFY1998–SFY2002

	Amphetamines*	Crack Cocaine	Powdered Cocaine	Marijuana	Heroin	Total
SFY1998	1,822	1,968	609	2,588	109	7,096
SFY1999	2,153	1,561	506	2,823	82	7,125
SFY2000	2,601	1,516	561	2,865	61	7,604
SFY2001	2,834	1,542	582	3,370	74	8,402
SFY2002	2,993	1,524	633	3,652	59	8,861

*Most of the amphetamine-related treatment admissions are methamphetamine-related.

Source: Arkansas Department of Health.

Juvenile drug abuse is a concern in Arkansas. According to the 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 21.1 percent of high school students in Arkansas reported that they had been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property during the past 12 months, although this rate is lower than the nationwide percentage of 28.5. Further, 10.8 percent of individuals aged 12 to 17 in Arkansas reported having abused an illicit drug within the past month, according to combined data from the 1999 and the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). This rate is statistically comparable to the reported nationwide percentage of 9.8.

The percentage of federal sentences in Arkansas that were drug-related is slightly higher than the national percentage. According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC), drug-related sentences accounted for 43 percent of all federal sentences in the state in fiscal year (FY) 2001, compared with 41 percent nationwide. Forty-one percent of the drug-related federal sentences in Arkansas were crack cocaine-related, significantly higher than the national percentage (20%). Methamphetamine-related offenses accounted for 33 percent of the drug-related sentences in Arkansas, compared with 14 percent nationwide.

Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is a principal drug threat to Arkansas, primarily because of the drug's ready availability and the violence and environmental harm that often result from methamphetamine production and abuse. Methamphetamine produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico, California, and southwestern states is widely available in Arkansas. Methamphetamine produced in the state, generally by Caucasian local independent producers, also is available.

Abuse

Law enforcement officials in Arkansas report that methamphetamine abuse is a significant problem throughout the state. In response to the

Marijuana-related offenses accounted for 12 percent of drug-related federal sentences in the state, compared with 33 percent nationwide, and powdered cocaine-related offenses accounted for 12 percent of the sentences, compared with 22 percent nationwide. Moreover, the number of drug-related arrests recorded annually by the Arkansas Crime Information Center increased from 12,858 in 1997 to 14,754 in 2001.

The total financial impact on Arkansas government from substance abuse-related costs is significant. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University reported that in 1998 (the latest year for which statistics are available), Arkansas spent \$519 million—approximately \$206 per resident—on substance abuse-related costs. This figure represents costs and services across program areas including justice, education, health, child-family assistance, mental health-developmental disabilities, public safety, and the state workforce. This accounted for approximately 7.8 percent of the state's total budget. When factoring in the cost of lost productivity and nongovernmental expenses by private social services, estimates for total substance abuse-related costs are even higher.

Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters and wholesale distributors of methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states. Local independent producers control the transportation and distribution of the methamphetamine they produce within the state. Mexican criminal groups, Caucasian local independent dealers, street gangs, and OMGs distribute methamphetamine at the retail level throughout Arkansas.

National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) 2002, all of the 24 law enforcement respondents in Arkansas

indicated that methamphetamine abuse was high in their jurisdictions. (See text box.)

Amphetamine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Arkansas increased by 80 percent from 1,547 in 1998 to 2,781 in 2002, according to the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). (Nationwide, 95 percent of the amphetamine-related treatment admissions reported to TEDS are methamphetamine-related.) The Arkansas Department of Health reports that the number of amphetamine-related treatment admissions, which includes methamphetamine-related admissions, increased by 64 percent from 1,822 in SFY1998 to 2,993 in SFY2002. (See Table 1 on page 3.) (Disparities between federal and state reporting on admissions to substance abuse treatment programs likely occur because of differences in data collection and reporting methodologies.)

Methamphetamine abuse among adolescents in Arkansas is statistically comparable to the national rate. According to the 2001 YRBS, 11.8 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 in Arkansas reported having used methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime, compared to 9.8 percent nationwide.

Availability

Methamphetamine is readily available throughout Arkansas. In response to the NDTs 2002, all of the 24 law enforcement respondents in Arkansas indicated that methamphetamine availability was high in their jurisdictions. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states is widely available in Arkansas; however, methamphetamine produced in the state also is available. In addition, crystal methamphetamine, commonly referred to as ice, is available in the state and, according to the DEA New Orleans Division, crystal methamphetamine seizures have increased in the Fayetteville area.

According to the Federal-wide Drug Seizure System (FDSS), federal law enforcement officials in Arkansas seized 13.8 kilograms of

NDIC National Drug Threat Survey

The National Drug Threat Survey 2002 was administered by NDIC to a representative sample of state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the United States to assess the availability, abuse, and overall threat posed by all major drugs. NDIC received 2,906 survey responses from law enforcement agencies, an overall response rate of 80 percent. Survey respondents were asked to rank the greatest drug threats to their areas and to indicate the level of availability for each major drug type. They also were asked to provide information on specific groups involved in the transportation and distribution of illicit drugs. Responding agencies also provided narrative assessments of various aspects of the overall drug situation and the threat that specific drugs posed to their areas. Survey responses are used by NDIC to substantiate and augment drug threat information obtained from other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

Crystal Methamphetamine

Crystal methamphetamine is a colorless, odorless form of smokable d-methamphetamine resembling glass fragments or ice shavings. In most areas of the United States where crystal methamphetamine is available, its production (a process of crystallizing methamphetamine) and distribution normally are associated with Asian traffickers.

methamphetamine in 1998, 15.7 kilograms in 1999, 9.1 kilograms in 2000, 9.2 kilograms in 2001, and 14.8 kilograms in 2002. In addition, the Arkansas State Police seized more than 1.3 kilograms of methamphetamine in 2001 and more than 37.0 kilograms in 2002.

Federal-Wide Drug Seizure System

FDSS data comprise seizures made in the United States by DEA, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Only seizures that exceed certain threshold weights are included in these statistics: 250 grams of methamphetamine, 500 grams of cocaine, 100 grams of heroin, and 25 kilograms of marijuana.

The percentage of federal sentences that were methamphetamine-related in Arkansas was more than twice the national percentage. According to USSC in FY2001, 33 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Arkansas were methamphetamine-related, compared with 14 percent nationwide. (See Table 2.) There were 63 federal sentences for methamphetamine-related offenses in Arkansas in FY1997, 63 in FY1998, 50 in FY1999, 62 in FY2000, and 55 in FY2001.

Prices for methamphetamine in Arkansas have remained relatively stable, while purity levels have fluctuated. According to the DEA New Orleans Division, methamphetamine has sold for \$10,000 per pound, \$1,000 to \$1,600 per ounce,

and \$100 per gram in Fayetteville, Little Rock, and Fort Smith since FY1999. The Fayetteville Police Department reports that the most common quantity sold on the street in Fayetteville is an “8-ball” (one-eighth ounce) that sells for \$250. According to DEA’s System to Retrieve Information from Drug Evidence (STRIDE), the average purity of methamphetamine analyzed in Arkansas was 29.8 percent in FY1998, 31.6 percent in FY1999, 39.2 percent in FY2000, 64.3 percent in FY2001, and 35.0 percent in FY2002.

Table 2. Percentage of Drug-Related Federal Sentences for Methamphetamine Arkansas and United States, FY1997–FY2001

	Arkansas	United States
FY1997	30.8	10.2
FY1998	35.5	11.4
FY1999	27.9	12.8
FY2000	41.9	14.5
FY2001	33.3	14.2

Source: U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Violence

The potential for violence associated with methamphetamine abuse is a concern within the state. Methamphetamine abusers are unpredictable and experience feelings of fright and confusion, particularly during the tweaking stage of abuse. They often are paranoid and delusional and frequently arm themselves against perceived threats. In addition, methamphetamine abusers will commit violent crimes to obtain the drug. The Washington County Sheriff’s Office reports that methamphetamine is associated with violent crime in its jurisdiction, while the Searcy Police Department reports that an overwhelming number of violent offenders in Searcy are methamphetamine abusers. Methamphetamine abuse also has been linked to incidents of domestic battery in Arkansas.

Tweaking

As the euphoric effects of methamphetamine diminish, abusers enter the tweaking stage in which they are prone to violence, delusions, paranoia, and feelings of emptiness and dysphoria. During the tweaking stage, the user often has not slept in days and, consequently, is extremely irritable. The “tweaker” also craves more methamphetamine, which results in frustration and contributes to anxiety and restlessness. In this stage, the methamphetamine abuser may become violent without provocation. Case histories indicate that tweakers have reacted violently to the mere sight of a police uniform.

Violence associated with methamphetamine distribution also is a concern to law enforcement officials in Arkansas. Methamphetamine distributors sometimes commit violent crimes to defend or expand their distribution territory. Street gangs that distribute methamphetamine reportedly have committed aggravated assault, drive by shooting, and homicide. Arkansas law enforcement respondents to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000 reported that the following gangs distribute methamphetamine and commit violent crimes in their jurisdictions: Gangster Disciples, Tiny Oriental Crips, Young Oriental Gangsters, and 8th Street in Fort Smith and Mara Salvatrucha in Rogers.

Methamphetamine production and abuse in Arkansas adversely affect children. Children are exposed to toxic chemicals and byproducts when methamphetamine laboratories are operated in or near their homes. In addition, children of methamphetamine laboratory operators often are

abused or neglected. According to EPIC, 76 children were found at methamphetamine laboratory sites in Arkansas during 2002.

Methamphetamine Laboratory in Day Care Facility

In November 2002, officers with the Siloam Springs Police Department arrested a 39-year-old woman who had produced methamphetamine while operating a day care facility in her home. She was charged with possessing methamphetamine, possessing drug paraphernalia with intent to manufacture methamphetamine, and endangering the welfare of a minor. Siloam Springs law enforcement officials had initiated an investigation into the day care facility/home in response to information received from the general public.

Source: Siloam Springs Police Department.

Production

Mexican criminal groups using the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus reduction method in high-volume laboratories in Mexico, California, and southwestern states produce most of the methamphetamine available in Arkansas. Caucasian local independent laboratory operators also produce methamphetamine in Arkansas. They typically use the iodine/red phosphorus method and, to a lesser extent, the Birch reduction (Nazi) method to produce gram to ounce quantities of methamphetamine for personal use and for distribution to friends and associates. (See Methamphetamine Production Methods text box on page 9.)

The number of methamphetamine laboratories seized in Arkansas increased overall from 1998 through 2002. According to EPIC, the number of laboratories, chemicals, glassware, and dumpsites seized in Arkansas increased from 239 in FY1998

to 383 in FY1999. Thereafter, the number of such seizures stabilized: 392 were seized in FY2000, 393 in FY2001, and 386 in FY2002. In addition, the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory reports that 428 methamphetamine laboratories, dumpsites, or chemicals and glassware were seized statewide in calendar year 1998, 552 in 1999, 780 in 2000, 853 in 2001, 955 in 2002, and 749 in the first 7 months of 2003. (See Table 3 on page 8.) (Disparities between federal and state reporting on seizures of methamphetamine laboratories occur because of differences in data collection and reporting methodologies.) Most of these laboratories were relatively small, rudimentary, and portable, making their detection a challenge for law enforcement authorities. A number of these laboratories were located in apartments, single-family homes, hotel rooms, vehicles, and abandoned barns and farmhouses.

Table 3. Methamphetamine Laboratory Seizures, Arkansas, 1998–2002

	Number of Laboratories Seized
1998	428
1999	552
2000	780
2001	853
2002	955

Source: Arkansas State Police.

The iodine/red phosphorus method of methamphetamine production is predominantly found at methamphetamine laboratories seized in Arkansas. According to the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory, 40 percent of the methamphetamine laboratories seized statewide in 2000 used the iodine/red phosphorus method compared with 62 percent in 2002. Iodine/red phosphorus laboratories have been seized in Conway, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Greenwood, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Pine Bluff, Searcy, Siloam Springs, Springdale, Texarkana, and West Memphis. The Birch reduction method of methamphetamine production also is used in the state and is common in the agricultural areas of Arkansas because of the wide availability of anhydrous ammonia. Anhydrous ammonia is used legitimately as a fertilizer, but is diverted by methamphetamine producers as an essential chemical for production of the drug. The percentage of Birch reduction laboratories seized statewide dropped from 35 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2002. Birch reduction laboratories have been seized in Conway, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Morrilton, Pine Bluff, Searcy, Springdale, Siloam Springs, and Texarkana. The P2P production method is used less frequently in Arkansas. Methamphetamine laboratories using the P2P method have been seized in Little Rock, Morrilton, Pine Bluff, and Springdale.

The chemicals used in methamphetamine production are readily available in Arkansas. Anhydrous ammonia often is stolen from farms and farm

supply outlets. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine can be extracted from diet pills and many over-the-counter cold medicines using coffee filters, coffee-pots, tabletop grills, and microwave ovens. Iodine can be purchased at local feed stores, and lithium often is extracted from camera batteries.

Feed Store Owner Convicted for Distributing Iodine Crystals

In May 2002 a federal grand jury convicted a Sallisaw, Oklahoma, feed store owner on 12 charges, including conspiracy to distribute listed chemicals, possession and distribution of listed chemicals, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and money laundering, related to selling iodine crystals to produce methamphetamine. From January 1998 to September 2000, the feed store owner bought nearly 5,000 pounds of iodine crystals at a cost of \$8 per ounce. The feed store owner allegedly sold the iodine crystals for \$50 per ounce to individuals in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma, knowing they would be used to produce methamphetamine. The feed store owner allegedly made a profit of more than \$3.3 million from the sale of the iodine crystals.

Source: U.S. Attorney's Office Eastern District of Oklahoma.

Methamphetamine production creates serious safety and environmental concerns. Toxic and hazardous waste from methamphetamine production endangers law enforcement personnel, emergency response teams, children (particularly those in the homes of methamphetamine producers), and the environment. The chemicals used in the production process are toxic, highly flammable, and yield poisonous vapors. Production of 1 pound of methamphetamine yields approximately 5 to 7 pounds of toxic waste. Methamphetamine laboratory operators often dump chemicals in areas accessible to the public. These chemicals contaminate soil, streams and rivers, and public sewer systems. Remediation of laboratory sites costs federal, state, and local governments millions of dollars every year. The average cost of cleaning one site is \$5,000; however, costs can exceed \$100,000 for larger sites.

Methamphetamine Production Methods

Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine Reduction:

- **Hydriodic acid/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, hydriodic acid, and red phosphorus. This method can yield multipound quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is associated with Mexican DTOs and criminal groups.
- **Iodine/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and red phosphorus. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with red phosphorus. This method yields high quality d-methamphetamine.
- **Iodine/hypophosphorous acid.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and hypophosphorous acid. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with hypophosphorous acid. Known as the hypo method, this method yields lower quality d-methamphetamine. Hypophosphorous acid is more prone than red phosphorus to cause a fire and can produce deadly phosphine gas.
- **Birch.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, anhydrous ammonia, and sodium or lithium metal. Also known as the Nazi method, this method typically yields ounce quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is used by independent dealers and producers.

Phenyl-2-propanone:

- **P2P.** The principal chemicals are phenyl-2-propanone, aluminum, methylamine, and mercuric acid. This method yields lower quality dl-methamphetamine and traditionally was associated with OMGs.

Police Seize Largest Methamphetamine Laboratory Ever Discovered in Arkansas

In May 2003 officers with the Fort Smith Police Department and Arkansas State Police, along with a team of chemists from the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory and environmental specialists from a private waste disposal company, assisted with the cleanup and dismantling of the largest methamphetamine laboratory ever seized in the state. More than 500 pounds of volatile chemicals were found in an unoccupied house in the Fort Smith Historic District. Fort Smith Police Department officers, assisted by Arkansas State Police officers, seized the laboratory, which had been operating for approximately 6 months and was used to produce one-half pound of methamphetamine per week but was capable of producing much larger quantities. It is believed that the methamphetamine producer, a 42-year-old man, was using the Birch reduction method of production. The principal chemicals associated with that method include ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, anhydrous ammonia, and sodium or lithium metal. The suspect, who was charged with intent to manufacture methamphetamine, had sealed the house with plastic sheeting and duct tape to contain the chemical odors.

Source: Fort Smith Police Department; Arkansas State Crime Laboratory.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of methamphetamine into Arkansas. These groups transport the drug from Mexico, California, and southwestern states generally in private and commercial vehicles outfitted with hidden compartments. Mexican criminal groups typically transport methamphetamine along I-30 and I-40 en route to destinations such as Fort Smith, Little Rock, and North Little Rock. Caucasian local independent producers also transport small quantities of locally produced methamphetamine throughout the state using private vehicles.

Mexican criminal groups often employ couriers to transport methamphetamine into Arkansas. Hispanic migrants, primarily Mexican nationals who have relocated to Arkansas seeking employment in the poultry producing and processing industry, often are recruited by Mexican criminal groups to transport methamphetamine. Caucasians and African Americans are also employed as couriers, but to a lesser extent. Cities such as North Little Rock and Pine Bluff, where poultry producing and processing operations are located, have become primary destinations for methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states.

Distribution

Mexican criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states. Methamphetamine is not produced locally in quantities large enough to support wholesale distribution.

Mexican criminal groups, Caucasian local independent dealers, street gangs, and OMGs distribute methamphetamine at the retail level. Mexican criminal groups are the primary retail distributors of methamphetamine produced in

Methamphetamine Seized Along Interstate 40

In July 2001 Arkansas State Police seized 11 pounds of methamphetamine with an estimated street value of \$1.5 million. The drug was seized from two women from California, en route from Los Angeles to Little Rock, traveling in a private vehicle eastbound on I-40 in Pope County. The women were pulled over by an Arkansas State Police officer for a traffic violation. During the stop, the officer conducted a consensual search of the vehicle and found the methamphetamine in the trunk and bumper of the car. The methamphetamine was wrapped with fabric softener sheets and smeared with dried mustard to mask its odor. The women were arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver. This was the largest methamphetamine seizure in the state in 2001.

Source: 5th Judicial Drug Task Force.

Mexico, California, and southwestern states. Caucasian local independent dealers, street gangs, and OMGs distribute methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states, as well as locally produced methamphetamine. Retail distribution of methamphetamine in Arkansas typically occurs in residences, parking lots, or business establishments such as bars, strip clubs, and taverns. Retail sales generally involve small amounts such as gram or eighth-ounce quantities. Methamphetamine sold at the retail level is most frequently packaged in plastic bags.

Cocaine

Cocaine, particularly crack, poses a significant threat to Arkansas because it is readily available, highly addictive, and frequently associated with violent crime. Powdered cocaine is available throughout most of the state, while crack cocaine primarily is available in the larger cities. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation of powdered cocaine into Arkansas, smuggling the drug from Mexico through California and southwestern states to Arkansas primarily in private and commercial vehicles. These groups also dominate wholesale powdered cocaine distribution throughout the state. African American street gangs and local independent dealers also distribute

some powdered cocaine at the wholesale level. African American street gangs and local independent dealers are the primary distributors of powdered and crack cocaine at the retail level. Mexican criminal groups also distribute powdered cocaine at the retail level, but to a lesser extent. African American street gangs and local independent dealers typically convert powdered cocaine to crack for retail distribution at or near distribution sites. Retail cocaine distribution commonly occurs on street corners, in bars, and at private residences and is facilitated by the use of pagers, pay phones, and cellular telephones.

Abuse

Law enforcement officials in Arkansas report that cocaine abuse is common in the state. Law enforcement officials in Arkansas County, Franklin County, Garland County, Pulaski County, Conway, El Dorado, Fort Smith, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Morrilton, Pine Bluff, Searcy, Springdale, Stuttgart, Texarkana, and West Memphis who responded to the NDTs 2002 reported that levels of powdered cocaine or crack cocaine abuse are high in their jurisdictions. The percentage of Arkansas residents who report having abused cocaine in the past year is statistically comparable to the percentage nationwide. According to combined data from the 1999 and the 2000 NHSDA, 1.5 percent of Arkansas residents aged 12 and over reported having abused cocaine in the year prior to the survey, compared to 1.6 percent nationwide.

Cocaine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Arkansas increased slightly (5%) from 1,900 in 1998 to 2,003 in 2002, according to TEDS. However, data from the Arkansas Department of Health indicate that the

number of cocaine-related treatment admissions decreased 16 percent, from 2,577 in SFY1998 to 2,157 in SFY2002. (See Table 1 on page 3.) (Disparities between federal and state reporting on admissions to substance abuse treatment programs likely occur because of differences in data collection and reporting methodologies.)

Treatment admissions for crack cocaine abuse are significantly higher than for powdered cocaine abuse in Arkansas. According to TEDS, of the 2,003 cocaine-related treatment admissions reported in 2002, 1,656 were related to smoked cocaine (crack) abuse. Of the 2,157 cocaine-related treatment admissions reported by the Arkansas Department of Health in 2002, 1,524 were for crack.

Cocaine abuse among Arkansas youth is statistically comparable to the national percentage. According to the 2001 YRBS, 8.7 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 in Arkansas reported having used cocaine at least once in their lifetime, compared to 9.4 percent nationwide.

Availability

Powdered cocaine is readily available throughout most of the state, while crack cocaine is primarily available in the larger cities. Law enforcement officials in Conway, El Dorado, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Morrilton, Pine Bluff, Searcy, Siloam Springs, Springdale, Stuttgart, Texarkana, and West Memphis who responded to the NDTs 2002 reported that powdered cocaine and crack cocaine were readily available in their jurisdictions. Law enforcement officials in Greenwood and Poinsett County reported that powdered cocaine and crack cocaine were moderately available.

Seizure data also reflect the ready availability of cocaine in Arkansas. According to FDSS data, federal law enforcement officials in Arkansas seized 290.8 kilograms of cocaine in 1998, 660.2 kilograms in 1999, 1,224.6 kilograms in 2000, 23.8 kilograms in 2001, and 303.3 kilograms in 2002. Law enforcement authorities who reported to Operation Pipeline seized nearly 1,588 kilograms of cocaine on Arkansas highways in 2000 and 212 kilograms in 2001.

Operation Pipeline

Operation Pipeline is a national highway interdiction program supported by EPIC. Drug seizures from private vehicles are reported to Operation Pipeline primarily by state and local law enforcement agencies operating nationwide along the highways and interstates most frequently used to transport illegal drugs and drug proceeds.

In FY2001 the percentage of cocaine-related federal sentences in Arkansas was higher than the national percentage. According to USSC data, in FY2001, 52 percent of federal drug-related sentences in Arkansas were for cocaine-related offenses, compared with 43 percent nationally. There were 14 sentences for powdered cocaine-related violations in Arkansas in FY1997, 17 in FY1998, 30 in FY1999, 25 in FY2000, and 19 in FY2001. The number of crack cocaine-related federal sentences was 70 in FY1997, 49 in FY1998, 65 in FY1999, 43 in FY2000, and 67 in FY2001.

According to the DEA New Orleans Division, from FY1999 through FY2002 powdered cocaine sold for \$100 to \$200 per gram in Fayetteville, \$80 to \$100 per gram in Little Rock, and \$100 per gram in Fort Smith. During the same period powdered cocaine sold for \$800 to \$900 per ounce in Fayetteville, \$1,200 to \$1,600 per ounce in Fort Smith, and \$900 to \$1,200 per ounce in Little Rock. Crack cocaine sold for \$800 to \$1,000 per ounce in Fayetteville and Little Rock, and \$1,600 per ounce in Fort Smith from FY1999 through FY2002, according to DEA. Local law enforcement officials report that crack sold for \$20 per rock in Fayetteville, \$10 per rock in Little Rock, and from \$10 to \$30 per rock, depending on the size, in Fort Smith in 2003. STRIDE program data indicate that the average purity of powdered cocaine decreased statewide from 77.6 percent in FY1998 to 71.8 percent in FY2002, while the average purity of crack cocaine decreased from 65.8 percent to 50.6 percent during the same period.

Violence

Violent crime in the state often is associated with crack cocaine distribution and abuse. Crack abusers often commit violent crimes to support their addiction, and crack distributors commonly

commit violent crimes to protect their drug operations. The Stuttgart Police Department reports that incidents of crack cocaine-related burglary, theft, and prostitution are common. According to

the Fort Smith Police Department, many of the violent crimes in its jurisdiction are related to crack distributors attempting to collect debts from abusers. The Searcy Police Department reports that an overwhelming portion of the violent crime in its jurisdiction is related to crack cocaine abuse. According to the Hot Springs Police Department, there has been an increase in drive-by shootings linked to territorial disputes over crack cocaine distribution as well as an increase in the number of residential burglaries and shoplifting incidents committed by crack abusers.

Street gangs that distribute crack cocaine in Arkansas often are associated with violent crime. Respondents to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000 reported that street gangs in Arkansas that distribute cocaine, particularly crack cocaine, commit violent crimes. These gangs include

Young Oriental Gangsters in Fort Smith, Piru in Jonesboro, numerous sets of Bloods in Little Rock, and NWA, Project Boys, and 18th Street in West Memphis.

Gang Violence

In October 2002 a 19-year-old gang member from Little Rock was sentenced to life in prison for the murder of a 17-year-old member of a rival gang. The defendant was a member of Folks, a gang that is based in Chicago and has members in southwest Little Rock. The victim was a member of Vice Lords, a gang that also is based in Chicago and controls a public housing project in central Little Rock where the victim was shot. Folks and Vice Lords both distribute crack cocaine in Little Rock.

Source: Little Rock Police Department.

Production

Coca is not cultivated, nor is cocaine produced in Arkansas. Cocaine is produced in South America, primarily Colombia. However, retail distributors commonly convert powdered cocaine

into crack in the state on an as-needed basis. Crack conversion commonly occurs near distribution sites at stash houses or homes of street gang members.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of wholesale quantities of powdered cocaine into and through Arkansas. They generally smuggle the drug from Mexico through California and southwestern states to Arkansas. Mexican criminal groups also transport powdered cocaine into Arkansas from Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Kansas; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Memphis, Tennessee. African American street gangs and, to a lesser extent, African American independent dealers also transport wholesale quantities of powdered cocaine into Arkansas, primarily from Los Angeles.

Cocaine typically is transported into Arkansas via Interstates 30 and 40. The drug generally is

concealed in hidden compartments located in commercial and private vehicles. Transporters also intermingle cocaine with legitimate items such as produce, or conceal the drug in luggage.

Cocaine destined for other states often is transported through Arkansas. Law enforcement officers in Arkansas have seized cocaine destined for other areas including Illinois, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C. For example, in March 2003 Arkansas State Police seized 35 pounds of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$1.5 million from a van traveling east on Highway 64 near I-40 in London. The officer had stopped the van for a traffic violation. A consensual search of the vehicle revealed the

cocaine concealed inside the spare tire. The operator of the van identified himself as a resident of Marietta, Georgia, and claimed to be en route from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Atlanta, Georgia. He was arrested on charges of possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver and obstructing governmental operations.

Most of the crack cocaine available in Arkansas is converted locally on an as-needed basis to avoid the stricter federal penalties associated with crack possession. However, African American

street gangs and African American local independent dealers transport some crack cocaine into Arkansas from surrounding states. According to the Fayetteville Police Department, African American local independent dealers transport crack from West Memphis, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, to Fayetteville. Law enforcement officials in Fort Smith report that African American local independent dealers transport crack into their jurisdiction from Oklahoma City.

Distribution

Mexican criminal groups are the primary wholesale distributors of powdered cocaine throughout the state. These groups reportedly are supplied by other Mexican criminal groups in Los Angeles, California, and Houston and Dallas, Texas. African American street gangs and local independent dealers also distribute some powdered cocaine at the wholesale level throughout the state.

African American street gangs and local independent dealers are the primary distributors of powdered cocaine at the retail level. Mexican criminal groups also distribute powdered cocaine at the retail level, but to a lesser extent. Retail powdered cocaine distribution commonly is pre-arranged or conducted using pagers, pay phones,

and cellular telephones. Transactions occur in residences, on street corners, and at bars.

African American street gangs and local independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of crack cocaine in the state, particularly in the Little Rock and West Memphis areas. Crack typically is not distributed at the wholesale level. Street gangs that distribute crack cocaine at the retail level in Arkansas include Crips, Bloods, Folks, and Vice Lords in Little Rock and Vice Lords and Gangster Disciples in West Memphis. Crack cocaine typically is sold at private residences (especially in low-income public housing complexes), motel rooms, open-air drug markets, parking lots, and bars.

Marijuana

Marijuana is the most widely available and frequently abused illicit drug in Arkansas. Most of the marijuana available in the state is produced in Mexico, although some cannabis is cultivated locally. Mexican criminal groups, local independent dealers, and street gangs transport marijuana into Arkansas in private and commercial vehicles.

Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary wholesale- and retail-level marijuana distributors in the state. Street gangs also distribute marijuana at the retail level. Marijuana typically is distributed at the retail level from bars, strip clubs, schools, parking lots, residences, businesses, and at concerts.

Abuse

Law enforcement officials in Arkansas report that there are high levels of marijuana abuse throughout the state. Of the 24 Arkansas law enforcement respondents to the NDTs 2002, 19 indicated that marijuana abuse was high in their jurisdictions, and 5 indicated that abuse was moderate. The percentage of Arkansas residents who report having abused marijuana in the past month is statistically comparable to the percentage nationwide. According to combined data from the 1999 and the 2000 NHSDA, 3.9 percent of Arkansas residents aged 12 and over reported having abused marijuana in the year prior to the survey compared to 4.8 percent of individuals nationwide.

Marijuana is the most commonly abused illicit drug in Arkansas. According to TEDS, the number of marijuana-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Arkansas

increased 36 percent from 2,230 in 1998 to 3,030 in 2002. Arkansas Department of Health statistics indicate that the number of marijuana-related treatment admissions increased 41 percent from 2,588 in SFY1998 to 3,652 in SFY2002. (See Table 1 on page 3.) (Disparities between federal and state reporting on admissions to substance abuse treatment programs likely occur because of differences in data collection and reporting methodologies.)

Marijuana abuse among Arkansas youth is statistically comparable to the national percentage. According to the 2001 YRBS, 43.6 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 in Arkansas reported having used marijuana at least once in their lifetime, compared to 42.4 percent nationwide.

Availability

Marijuana produced in Mexico, particularly commercial-grade marijuana, is the most widely available type of the drug in the state. Marijuana produced in Arkansas also is available. According to the NDTs 2002, of the 24 law enforcement respondents in Arkansas, 21 indicated that marijuana availability was high in their jurisdictions, and 3 indicated that availability was moderate.

Seizure data reflect the ready availability of marijuana in Arkansas. According to FDSS data, federal law enforcement officials in Arkansas seized 1,149.6 kilograms of marijuana in 1998, 1,273.2 kilograms in 1999, 1,856.6 kilograms in 2000, 2,281.1 kilograms in 2001, and 1,330.1 kilograms in 2002. Law enforcement authorities who reported to Operation Pipeline seized over 4,327 kilograms of marijuana in 2000 and over 1,325 kilograms in 2001.

The percentage of marijuana-related sentences in Arkansas is significantly less than the national percentage. According to USSC data, in FY2001 12 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Arkansas were for marijuana-related offenses, compared with 33 percent nationally. There were 49 federal sentences for marijuana violations in Arkansas in FY1997, 44 in FY1998, 26 in FY1999, 13 in FY2000, and 20 in FY2001.

Marijuana prices in Arkansas are relatively stable throughout the state. According to the DEA New Orleans Division, in the fourth quarter of FY2002 marijuana sold for \$1,000 per pound and \$120 per ounce in Fayetteville, \$800 to \$900 per pound and \$100 to \$140 per ounce in Little Rock, and \$900 to \$1,300 per pound and \$120 per ounce in Fort Smith.

Violence

Violence has been associated with marijuana production and distribution in Arkansas, but to a limited extent. Domestic cannabis growers sometimes are armed and use booby traps to protect their cultivation sites from law enforcement authorities. Firearms occasionally are seized from cannabis growing sites in Arkansas. Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP) statistics indicate that law enforcement officials in Arkansas seized 87 weapons in 1997, 88 in 1998, 66 in 1999, 69 in 2000, and 42 in

2001 during cannabis eradication operations. Respondents to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000 reported that many street gangs that distribute marijuana in Arkansas also commit violent crimes in the state such as assault, auto theft, drive-by shooting, and homicide. These gangs include the Young Oriental Gangsters in Fort Smith, Piru in Jonesboro, numerous sets of Bloods in Little Rock, Mara Salvatrucha in Rogers, and 18th Street in West Memphis.

Production

Most of the marijuana available in Arkansas is produced in Mexico; however, some cannabis is cultivated throughout the state, primarily by local independent Caucasian growers. In most areas of the state, cannabis is cultivated at outdoor grow sites; however, indoor cultivation sites have been encountered by law enforcement officers throughout Arkansas.

In Arkansas outdoor cannabis cultivation sites typically yield more cannabis per site than indoor sites. According to the DCE/SP, law enforcement authorities in Arkansas seized 332 outdoor plots containing 79,069 cannabis plants in 1999; 475 outdoor plots containing 98,133 cannabis plants in 2000, and 264 outdoor plots containing 39,197 plants in 2001. The DCE/SP reported that in 1999 they seized 16 indoor grow operations yielding 334 plants, 18 sites yielding 923 plants in 2000, and 23 sites yielding 306 plants in 2001.

Outdoor cannabis growers often conceal plants in an effort to avoid detection by law enforcement authorities. Cannabis cultivators

Cannabis Plants Seized

In May 2002 law enforcement personnel in Greene County seized 36 cannabis plants and two firearms (one of which had the serial number removed) and arrested one individual who had a prior felony drug conviction. The cannabis plants were found in four containers outside the residence.

Source: Greene County Sheriff's Office.

often scatter the plants among other crops, use camouflage netting, and establish cultivation sites in remote wooded locations. In August 2002 law enforcement authorities in Cross County, acting on a tip from a helicopter pilot, eradicated nearly 2,500 cannabis plants from an outdoor grow site. The plants were discovered concealed among a rice crop on an island. According to the Cross County Sheriff's Office, the plants were well-maintained and the landowner was not involved in the cultivation operation. This was the largest marijuana seizure ever in Cross County.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of wholesale quantities of Mexico-produced marijuana into and through Arkansas. Local independent dealers, primarily Caucasians, and street gangs also transport marijuana into the state. These transporters generally smuggle the drug into Arkansas from Mexico, California, and southwestern states.

Marijuana typically is transported into Arkansas in hidden compartments in private and commercial vehicles, and occasionally by couriers on buses, via the same routes used to transport methamphetamine and cocaine. Transporters use a variety of means to conceal marijuana during transportation, including boxes, metal containers, duffel bags, suitcases, and compartments installed in the side panels, floors, and tailgates of vehicles. Transporters also intermingle marijuana with legitimate items such as produce or conceal the drugs in luggage. Marijuana typically is wrapped in layers of cellophane and duct tape and covered in mustard or coffee grounds to mask the odor of the drug.

Arkansas is a transit state for marijuana shipments destined for drug markets throughout the United States. According to EPIC 2001 Operation Pipeline data, 27 of the 29 shipments of marijuana seized from vehicles on Arkansas highways were destined for other states. Marijuana transported via I-30 and I-40 through Arkansas primarily from California and Texas generally is destined for states in the Midwest and along the East Coast. In April 2002 Arkansas State Police in Crawford County seized 200 pounds of marijuana and arrested the driver of a commercial truck traveling on I-40 who was transporting the drug from California to

New Jersey. The officer at the scene had become suspicious after discovering discrepancies in the driver's log book and receipts. Upon searching the vehicle he found nine cardboard boxes containing 11 bundles of marijuana inside the cab of the truck.

Marijuana Seized Along Interstate 40

In February 2003 Arkansas State Police officers seized 2,669 pounds of marijuana, with an estimated retail value of \$3 million, from a recreational vehicle traveling east on I-40 near Clarksville during a routine traffic stop. The driver of the vehicle was stopped for a license plate violation and because the vehicle was impeding traffic by driving too slowly in the left lane. The responding officer became suspicious when the driver appeared nervous and because the vehicle was not registered in the driver's name. Prior to the search of the vehicle and the arrival of backup officers, the driver, a 31-year-old male, fled on foot. Seventeen boxes of marijuana were discovered stacked in the bedroom of the recreational vehicle. The marijuana was compressed into 464 bricks weighing 4 to 10 pounds each and wrapped in multiple layers of cellophane. Some of the boxes were marked with a reverse swastika symbol, the letter C, and a bull's-eye symbol. More than 15 pounds of coffee beans and ground coffee were strewn about the interior of the vehicle to mask the odor of the marijuana. The vehicle was en route from Yuma, Arizona, and allegedly was traveling to Hickory, North Carolina.

Source: Arkansas State Police.

Distribution

Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers, mostly Caucasians, are the primary wholesale distributors of Mexico-produced marijuana in Arkansas. Caucasian local independent dealers are the primary wholesale distributors of marijuana produced in the state.

Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers distribute Mexico-produced and

locally produced marijuana at the retail level in Arkansas. Street gangs such as Bloods, Crips, Gangster Disciples, and Vice Lords also serve as retail distributors of marijuana. At the retail level marijuana typically is packaged in sandwich bags and sold at bars, strip clubs, schools, parking lots, residences, businesses, and at concerts.

Other Dangerous Drugs

Other dangerous drugs (ODDs) pose varying threats to Arkansas. ODDs include the club drugs MDMA, GHB and its analogs, LSD, and Rohypnol; the hallucinogen psilocybin; inhalants; and diverted pharmaceuticals, including hydrocodone (Lortab, Lorcet, Vicodin), oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), codeine, and benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax.) Club drugs and psilocybin are transported into Arkansas in private vehicles, by couriers aboard commercial aircraft, and via package delivery services. Many of these drugs are distributed and abused by middle-class, suburban young adults and college students at raves, nightclubs, and on college campuses. Inhalant abusers, primarily adolescents, inhale chemical vapors from a variety of substances, many of which are common household products. Diverted pharmaceuticals generally are obtained throughout the state by diversion techniques including improper prescribing practices, prescription forgery, and “doctor shopping.”

Raves

Throughout the 1990s high energy, all-night dances known as raves, which feature techno music and flashing laser lights, increased in popularity among teens and young adults. Raves typically occur in either permanent dance clubs or temporary “weekend event” sites set up in abandoned warehouses, open fields, empty buildings, or civic centers. Club drugs are a group of synthetic drugs often sold at raves and dance clubs. MDMA is one of the most popular club drugs. Rave managers often sell water, bubble gum, glow sticks, and mentholated cream at rave parties. “Ravers” drink water to offset dehydration caused by MDMA; chew bubble gum to avoid grinding their teeth (a common side effect of MDMA); wave glow sticks in front of their eyes because MDMA stimulates light perception; and apply mentholated cream to their nostrils to produce a rush of feeling called freeze.

Club Drugs

MDMA. The increasing availability and abuse of MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine), particularly among teenagers and young adults, pose a growing threat to Arkansas. MDMA, also known as ecstasy, XTC, E, and X, is a stimulant and low-level hallucinogen. MDMA is generally

taken orally in tablet or capsule form. MDMA abuse is a concern among law enforcement and public health agencies in Arkansas because the drug can cause psychological problems similar to those associated with methamphetamine and cocaine abuse including confusion, depression,

sleeplessness, anxiety, and paranoia. The physical effects can include severe dehydration, muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. MDMA also can cause a marked increase in body temperature leading to muscle breakdown, kidney failure, cardiovascular system failure, stroke, or seizure. MDMA abuse may result in long-term, permanent damage to parts of the brain that are critical to thought and memory.

The availability and abuse of MDMA are increasing in Arkansas, particularly among young adults and in cities with colleges and universities. Law enforcement officials in Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Searcy, Texarkana, Franklin County, and Garland County report high levels of MDMA abuse and availability in their jurisdictions, while officials in Conway, El Dorado, Fayetteville, Little Rock, Springdale, West Memphis, Polk County, Pulaski County, and Washington County report moderate levels of abuse and availability.

MDMA Distributors Indicted

In October 2002 the DEA Administrator and the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas announced indictments against eight individuals from central Arkansas and Florida on charges of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 60,000 MDMA tablets. The indictments followed a 19-month investigation that was initiated in March 2001 by the North Little Rock Police Department after officers noted an increase in the number of MDMA-related arrests at raves. The investigation ultimately expanded to Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, and France. Other law enforcement agencies participating in the investigation include the Sherwood Police Department, Little Rock Police Department, and Pulaski County Sheriff's Office.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration Little Rock District Office.

Most MDMA available in Arkansas is produced outside the United States, typically in laboratories in the Netherlands and Belgium. It is transported by couriers aboard commercial aircraft through

national-level distribution centers such as Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Miami. From these distribution centers, MDMA generally is transported by private vehicle or via package delivery services directly into Arkansas or to regional distribution centers such as Dallas and Memphis for eventual transport to Arkansas and other states in the region. Law enforcement agencies throughout the state identify Caucasian local independent dealers as the primary transporters of MDMA into and throughout Arkansas. Law enforcement officers in Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Greenwood, Jonesboro, Texarkana, West Memphis, Franklin County, Garland County, and Washington County report that MDMA sold in their jurisdictions is transported from Dallas, Memphis, Shreveport, and Tulsa. Law enforcement officers in El Dorado and Pine Bluff report that MDMA sold in their jurisdictions is transported from Little Rock.

Caucasian local independent dealers dominate the distribution of MDMA at the wholesale and retail levels in Arkansas. They typically distribute MDMA at rave parties, nightclubs, and college campuses in the state. Raves are becoming increasingly popular in Arkansas, particularly in Fayetteville and Little Rock. The DEA New Orleans Division reports that MDMA tablets generally sell for \$20 to \$35 each in Arkansas.

GHB and Analogs. The threat to Arkansas from GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) and its analogs is increasing. GHB, also known as liquid ecstasy, grievous bodily harm, and Georgia home boy, is an illicit drug known for its euphoric, sedative, and anabolic effects. GHB is colorless, tasteless, and odorless, and its effects include drowsiness, sedation, loss of consciousness, and anterograde amnesia. It often is administered to intended victims of sexual assault. GHB is difficult to detect in abusers or victims of sexual assault because the drug is quickly metabolized in the body.

GHB analogs, drugs that possess chemical structures similar to GHB, also are abused in Arkansas. The most commonly encountered GHB analogs in Arkansas are GBL (gamma-butyrolactone) and BD (1,4-butanediol). GBL is

a solvent commonly used as a paint stripper. BD is a chemical used in the production of plastics and adhesives. GBL and BD convert to GHB upon ingestion. GBL is widely available as a powder and liquid at gyms, fitness centers, and some disreputable health food stores. BD can be produced in clear liquid, white powder, tablet, and capsule forms.

The availability and abuse of GHB and its analogs in Arkansas is increasing. Law enforcement officials in Arkansas indicate that college students, particularly young Caucasian males, are the primary transporters and distributors of GHB. Distributors typically drive to Texas or California in private vehicles to purchase the drug, then transport it to Arkansas for distribution at raves, nightclubs, and on college campuses. The drug usually is sold by the capful (approximately 1 teaspoon) for \$25.

LSD. The distribution and abuse of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is an emerging threat to Arkansas. LSD, also known as acid, boomers, and yellow sunshine, is a hallucinogen that induces abnormalities in sensory perceptions. The effects of LSD are unpredictable and depend on the amount taken, the environment in which it is used, and the user's personality, mood, and expectations. Abusers may feel the effects for up to 12 hours. Physical effects include dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, nausea, numbness, weakness, insomnia, dry mouth, and tremors. Two long-term disorders associated with LSD are persistent psychosis and hallucinogen persisting perception disorder (flashbacks). LSD typically is ingested orally.

Hallucinogens

Psilocybin. The distribution and abuse of psilocybin pose a low threat to Arkansas. Psilocybin is the primary psychoactive ingredient in psilocybin mushrooms. Psilocybin mushrooms typically are

Most LSD available in Arkansas is produced in California and transported by private vehicle or package delivery services to Arkansas either directly or via regional distribution centers such as Dallas and Houston. LSD generally is distributed by college-age Caucasian males at colleges, rave parties, and concerts. High school and college students and young adults are the primary abusers of LSD in the state. LSD is available and sold in powder and liquid forms, in tablets or capsules, on pieces of blotter paper that absorb the drug, and on small candies. Some dealers reportedly use an eyedropper to place LSD on a purchaser's tongue to ensure that the individual is not an undercover law enforcement officer. The DEA New Orleans Division Office reports that LSD sells for \$4 to \$8 per dose in Little Rock and for \$10 to \$20 per dose in Fayetteville.

Rohypnol. Rohypnol (flunitrazepam) is not widely available and poses a limited threat to Arkansas. Rohypnol, also known as roofies, rophies, Roche, and the forget-me pill, is a powerful sedative—up to 10 times stronger than Valium. It is not approved for prescription use in the United States but is used legally in more than 70 countries to treat sleep disorders or for use as a preanesthetic medication. Rohypnol is odorless and tasteless, and dissolves in beverages. It produces sedative-hypnotic effects, including muscle relaxation and severe amnesia, and can cause physiological and psychological dependence. Rohypnol reportedly is available and distributed to a limited extent at colleges and universities, raves, nightclubs, and bars in Arkansas. One milligram of Rohypnol can impair or incapacitate a victim for 8 to 12 hours. The use of alcohol, with which Rohypnol often is mixed, exacerbates the effects of the drug.

dried prior to consumption, and may be crushed into a white powder. Taken in nontoxic doses, psilocybin produces changes in perception, thought, and mood. Effects typically last for

approximately 6 hours. Typical abusers are young Caucasian adults, generally in their early twenties or younger. Psilocybin mushrooms are sold in Arkansas near colleges or universities and at

concerts. Distributors transport psilocybin mushrooms into Arkansas from southwestern states using overnight package delivery services and private vehicles.

Inhalants

The abuse of inhalants, commonly called huffing, occurs in Arkansas; however, it may be underreported because law enforcement officials and healthcare providers are often unfamiliar with the signs of inhalant abuse. Abusers, primarily adolescents, inhale chemical vapors from a variety of substances, many of which are common household products. Other methods of abuse include spraying aerosols directly into the nose or mouth or pouring inhalants onto the abuser's collar, sleeves, or cuffs and sniffing them over a period of time (such as during a class in school). Abusers reportedly use inhalants to obtain a euphoric

effect and often are unaware of the potential risks, which include brain damage and even death. Some abusers also use inhalants, particularly nitrites, in an attempt to enhance their sexual experiences.

High school students in Arkansas abuse inhalants at a rate comparable to students nationwide. According to the 2001 YRBS, 14.1 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 in Arkansas reported using inhalants at least once in their lifetime, compared to 14.7 percent nationwide.

Diverted Pharmaceuticals

Diverted pharmaceuticals pose an increasing threat to Arkansas. The most commonly abused pharmaceuticals in Arkansas are hydrocodone products (Lortab, Vicodin, Lorcet). Other frequently abused pharmaceuticals include codeine, oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan), hydromorphone (Dilaudid), and benzodiazepines (Valium and Xanax).

Prescription drugs are diverted by a number of means in Arkansas such as improper prescribing practices, pharmacy burglary, armed robbery, employee theft, and "doctor shopping"—a practice in which a patient visits multiple physicians to acquire numerous prescriptions. Some individuals recruit known or potential patients and use several

vehicles to transport the patients to several doctors in many communities in a single day or week to conduct large-scale doctor shopping sprees. Diverted pharmaceuticals also are transported into Arkansas by couriers, in private vehicles, or via package delivery services. The distribution of diverted pharmaceuticals in Arkansas has progressed over recent years from individuals selling to friends and acquaintances to individuals working in concert to sell large quantities from street corners, vehicles, or private residences. According to the DEA New Orleans Division, OxyContin sells for \$25 per 20-milligram tablet, and Dilaudid sells for \$40 to \$60 per 4-milligram tablet in Little Rock. No other pricing information is available.

Heroin

Heroin poses a low threat to Arkansas. Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin are available on a limited basis, primarily in the larger cities in the state such as Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Little Rock, and West Memphis. Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of heroin into Arkansas.

Local Caucasian independent distributors also transport heroin into Arkansas to a limited extent. Heroin generally is not distributed at the wholesale level in the state. Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of heroin.

Abuse

Rates of heroin abuse are generally low throughout the state. According to the NDTs 2002, of the 16 law enforcement respondents in Arkansas who rated the level of heroin abuse in their jurisdictions, 12 indicated that abuse was low, 3 indicated that abuse was moderate, and only 1 indicated that abuse was high.

Heroin-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Arkansas decreased during the past several years. According to TEDS, the number of heroin-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Arkansas decreased 31 percent from 75 in 1998 to 52 in 2002. Arkansas Department of Health statistics

indicate that the number of heroin-related treatment admissions decreased 46 percent from 109 in SFY1998 to 59 in SFY2002. (See Table 1 on page 3.) (Disparities between federal and state reporting on admissions to substance abuse treatment programs likely occur because of differences in data collection and reporting methodologies.)

Heroin abuse among Arkansas youth is equivalent to the national percentage. According to the 2001 YRBS, 3.1 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 in Arkansas reported having used heroin at least once in their lifetime, compared to 3.0 percent nationwide.

Availability

Mexico-produced heroin is available on a limited basis in Arkansas. Mexican black tar heroin is available in limited quantities in Fayetteville, Siloam Springs, Springdale, and Franklin County, and Mexican brown powdered heroin is available in limited quantities in Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Little Rock, West Memphis, and Franklin County.

The amount of heroin seized in Arkansas has been low over the past several years. According to FDSS data, federal law enforcement officials in Arkansas seized 2.2 kilograms of heroin in 1998 and 2.0 kilograms in 1999. No seizures of heroin

were reported to FDSS from 2000 through 2002. Likewise, no heroin seizures were reported to Operation Pipeline in 2000 or 2001.

The percentage of heroin-related federal sentences in Arkansas is lower than the national percentage. According to USSC data, in FY2001 heroin accounted for zero percent of drug-related federal sentences in Arkansas, compared with 7.2 percent nationally. There were 0 federal sentences for heroin-related offenses in Arkansas in FY1997, 1 in FY1998, 1 in FY1999, 1 in FY2000, and 0 in FY2001.

Heroin prices in Arkansas are relatively stable. According to the DEA New Orleans Division, heroin consistently has sold for \$250 to \$300 per gram in Fayetteville since FY2000 and for \$600 per gram in Little Rock since FY2001. The DEA

New Orleans Division did not report prices for Fort Smith because of the drug's limited availability in that jurisdiction. DEA STRIDE data indicate that the average purity of heroin in FY2002 in Arkansas was 44.3 percent.

Violence

Heroin generally is not associated with violence in Arkansas. However, heroin abusers

sometimes commit property crimes in order to acquire money to obtain the drug.

Production

Opium is not cultivated, nor is heroin produced in Arkansas. Heroin is produced in four source regions: South America, Southeast Asia,

Southwest Asia, and Mexico. The heroin available in Arkansas is produced in Mexico; other types generally are not available.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of heroin into Arkansas. They transport small quantities of heroin into Arkansas from southwestern states, generally in private vehicles

via the interstate highway system. Local Caucasian independent distributors also transport heroin into Arkansas to a limited extent.

Distribution

Heroin generally is not distributed at the wholesale level in the state. Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of heroin in the state. According to the NDTs 2002, law enforcement authorities in Little Rock identified Mexican criminal groups as the primary retail distributors of heroin in their jurisdiction, while law enforcement

authorities in Siloam Springs, West Memphis, Poinsett County, and Washington County identified local independent dealers as the primary retail heroin distributors in their jurisdictions. Law enforcement authorities in Franklin County identified both Mexican criminal groups and local independent dealers as retail heroin distributors in their jurisdiction.

Outlook

Methamphetamine will remain a principal drug threat to Arkansas. The availability of methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states will increase as Mexican criminal groups expand their wholesale distribution operations in Arkansas. The availability of locally produced methamphetamine also will likely increase to meet rising demand. As a consequence, methamphetamine-related environmental problems will persist.

Crack cocaine will continue to pose a significant threat to urban areas, and violent crime associated with the distribution and abuse of crack will continue to be a concern in Arkansas. Street gangs in the larger cities will continue to dominate the retail distribution of crack cocaine. Powdered cocaine will remain available in sufficient quantities to meet user demand. However, demand for powdered cocaine may decline in certain areas of the state as methamphetamine abuse increases.

Marijuana will remain the most widely available and frequently abused illicit drug in Arkansas. Mexico-produced marijuana will continue to be the most prevalent type available. Mexican criminal groups will remain the primary transporters of Mexico-produced marijuana in Arkansas. Caucasian local independent dealers will continue to cultivate cannabis in the state, distributing the marijuana they produce.

The popularity of ODDs, especially MDMA, is likely to increase among teenagers and young adults. The demand for MDMA, GHB and its analogs, and LSD may expand as the rave culture continues to take hold throughout the state. The demand for diverted pharmaceuticals also is likely to increase and may result in more pharmacy robberies, as well as more incidents of prescription fraud, forgery, and doctor shopping.

Heroin abuse will remain at low levels compared with the abuse of other illicit drugs. Heroin availability and abuse will likely remain limited to larger cities such as Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Little Rock, and West Memphis.

Sources

State Sources

Arkansas County Sheriff's Office

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

The Benton County Daily Record

Conway Police Department

El Dorado Police Department

Fayetteville Police Department

4th Judicial Drug Task Force

Fort Smith Police Department

Criminal Investigation Unit

Narcotics and Vice Unit

Franklin County Sheriff's Office

Garland County Sheriff's Office

Greene County Sheriff's Office

Greenwood Police Department

Hot Springs Police Department

Jonesboro Police Department

The Jonesboro Sun

Little Rock Police Department

Special Investigations Division

Special Narcotics Operations Unit

Morrilton Police Department

North Little Rock Police Department

Pine Bluff Police Department

Poinsett County Sheriff's Office

Polk County Sheriff's Office

Arkansas Drug Threat Assessment

Pulaski County Sheriff's Office

Searcy Police Department

Siloam Police Department

Springdale Police Department

State of Arkansas

- Arkansas Crime Information Center

- Arkansas Department of Health

- Arkansas Highway Police

- Arkansas State Crime Laboratory

- Arkansas State Police

 - 5th Judicial Drug Task Force

 - Criminal Investigation Division

 - Office of Investigative Support

Stuttgart Police Department

Texarkana Police Department

Times Record

Washington County Sheriff's Office

West Memphis Police Department

Federal

U.S. Department of Commerce

- U.S. Census Bureau

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

 - Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- National Institutes of Health

 - National Institute on Drug Abuse

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

 - Office of Applied Studies

 - National Household Survey on Drug Abuse

 - Treatment Episode Data Set

U.S. Department of Justice

Drug Enforcement Administration

Criminal Division

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force

Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program

El Paso Intelligence Center

Operation Jetway

Operation Pipeline

Federal-Wide Drug Seizure System

New Orleans Division

Little Rock District Office

System to Retrieve Information from Drug Evidence

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Oklahoma

Federal Bureau of Investigation

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Oklahoma

U.S. Sentencing Commission

Other

Associated Press

Association of American Railroads

Columbia University

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

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