



Texas Department of Public Safety

Information for the News Media
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16 arrested Wednesday in methamphetamine investigation

Law enforcement officers arrested 16 people Wednesday as the result of a two-year investigation into methamphetamine manufacturing rings.

Local, state and federal law enforcement agencies have been investigating the two groups, which have also been involved in other criminal offenses, including burglary, assaults, forgery and homicide.

DPS Narcotics officers in Midland, as well as the Texas state troopers, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Marshal Service, the Odessa Police Department, the Midland Police Department, the Ector County Sheriff's Department, the Ward County Sheriff's Office and the Monahans Police Department served arrest warrants at numerous locations Wednesday. The Howard County Sheriff's Office, the Midland County Sheriff's Office and Kermit Police Department have also assisted in this investigation.

Those arrested are accused of various crimes including possession of a List 1 chemical with intent to manufacture methamphetamine (a felony); sale, manufacturing or distributing a controlled substance (a felony); or conspiracy to manufacture a controlled substance (a felony). Over the past two years, law enforcement agencies have seized approximately 10 clandestine laboratories used to manufacture methamphetamine in Andrews, Ector, Howard and Ward counties. Today, investigators seized two more laboratories in Ward and Ector counties.

The people arrested today are accused of purchasing large quantities of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine and norpseudoephedrine at numerous pharmacies in the Midland, Odessa, Big Spring and Lubbock areas over the past two years. One of the major ingredients utilized in the manufacture of methamphetamines is ephedrine, pseudoephedrine (PSE) or norpseudoephedrine.

In August 2005, federal and state laws began requiring anyone buying an item that contains ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or norpseudoephedrine to show a government-

issued identification card (driver's license, identification card, state inmate card, etc.). Pharmacies that sell these items are required to log the name, address, identification card number, date, type of item(s) sold and the number of grams of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or norpseudoephedrine in the items --including cold medications such as Sudafed and Actifed and their generic versions.

Large amounts of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or norpseudoephedrine are used when manufacturing methamphetamines. Using pharmacy logs in the Permian Basin area, DPS investigators identified 42 suspects who have been charged in federal court with various drug charges that are being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Midland.

Of the 42 suspects charged, 23 have already been indicted, arrested, convicted and sentenced. Two have been indicted, arrested and convicted and are awaiting sentencing. Sixteen suspects were arrested today and at least one will be arrested in the near future. Investigators anticipate that other arrests may be made in the future.

The 42 suspects, working in several separate cells, are responsible for purchasing almost ten pounds of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or norpseudoephedrine, which could produce almost 7 pounds of methamphetamines. In the Permian Basin area, methamphetamines are sold for approximately \$100 per gram. It is estimated that the street value of the methamphetamines that were manufactured over the past two years is more than \$200,000.

DPS investigators want the public to know that law enforcement officers are not investigating every person who purchases these cold medications. However, you should be aware that pharmacies do track the purchase of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or norpseudoephedrine, and that tracking these purchases is an important tool in identifying and prosecuting people who are purchasing excess quantities of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or norpseudoephedrine so they can manufacture methamphetamines.

Anyone, who notices suspicious activities relating to the purchase of ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or norpseudoephedrine, is urged to contact a local, state or federal law enforcement agency.

Defendants arrested Wednesday:

- * ALDRIDGE, DAVID ALAN: DOB: 06-29-1959.
- * AVERITT, JAMES PERRY JR.: DOB: 04-06-1970.
- * BACON, BRITTANY RENE: DOB: 07-10-1984.
- * BAXTER, CLIFFORD WAYNE: DOB: 08-14-1970.
- * CALVERT, LAWANDA BRADLEY: DOB: 07-15-1959.
- * CANTRELL, TROY CHRIS: DOB: 08-15-1956.
- * CROW, MISTY DAWN: DOB: 02-12-1975.
- * HAYNES, TANYA SUE: DOB: 08-06-1973.
- * MERRITT, TERESA LANE: DOB: 08-26-1962.
- * MILBURN, JULIA LYNN: DOB: 03-15-1962.
- * PARADA, ELIZABETH ANN: DOB: 02-04-1969.

- * PRESTON, MICHELLE FAYE: DOB: 01-29-1981.
- * RAINS, MICHAEL GLYN: DOB: 06-01-1952.
- * SMITHEE, MICHAEL JOE: DOB: 09-07-1956.
- * THOMPSON, ROBERT ALLEN: DOB: 04-23-1956.
- * TRACY, KENNETH DALE: DOB: 05-17-1957.

Seized Clandestine Laboratories:

- * 12-12-06: Odessa. Located and processed by the Odessa Police Department Narcotics Division.
- * 03-29-07: Big Spring. Located by Howard County Sheriff's Office and processed by the Texas DPS Midland Narcotics office.
- * 07-16-07: Odessa. Located and processed by the Odessa Police Department.
- * 08-28-07: Odessa. Located and processed by the Texas DPS Midland Narcotics office.
- * 03-18-08: Monahans. Located and processed by the Texas DPS Midland Narcotics office.
- * 04-15-08: Kermit. Located by the Kermit Police Department and processed by the Texas DPS Midland Narcotics office.
- * 04-16-08: Odessa. Located and processed by the Texas DPS Midland Narcotics office.
- * 05-14-08: Monahans. Located and processed by the Texas DPS Midland Narcotics office.
- * 07-07-08: Ector County. Located by the Ector County Sheriff's Office and processed by the Ector County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Division and the Texas DPS Midland Narcotics office.
- * 10-21-08: Andrews. Located and processed by the Andrews Police Department and Drug Enforcement Administration Midland office.

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