



WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT US...

The Warren County Drug Task Force is a multi-jurisdictional unit specializing in the investigation of drug trafficking, prescription drug diversion, money laundering and other drug related crimes. The mission of the Warren County Drug Task Force is to conduct a coordinated strategy to significantly reduce drug trafficking and related criminal offenses that impact our jurisdiction. In addition to Warren County, we also provide drug enforcement services to the City of Wilmington in Clinton County.



The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to be an initiative of the Ohio HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area), based in Cleveland, Ohio. The HIDTA program provides assistance to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug trafficking regions of the nation. HIDTA assistance is granted through the Executive Office of the President of the United States, Office of Drug Control Policy.

The HIDTA program requires a collaborated local, state and federal effort to address drug trafficking and related crimes. As a result of this program, the Warren County Drug Task Force includes multiple law enforcement agencies combining resources and working together toward a common goal which allows us to operate more efficiently. This program allows us to target larger criminal organizations, some stretching to our southern most borders of the United States and beyond. This collaboration of resources results in a better coordinated effort to address all levels of drug trafficking and abuse with a concentrated effort toward mid to upper level offenders.

The Warren County Drug Task Force also participates in the Southwest Ohio Bulk Currency Smuggling Task Force. This is an Ohio Organized Crime Commission and Homeland Security Task Force investigating the packaging and transportation of bulk drug proceeds. This task force provides a variety of services to Warren County and other jurisdictions throughout southwest Ohio.

We continue our highway interdiction efforts with the assistance of our Ohio State Highway Patrol partners who provide a full-time uniform interdiction team with canines



to our task force. Working with this team is a deputy sheriff and canine from the Warren County Sheriff's Office. This highly trained team aggressively patrols the roadways of Warren County and southwest Ohio focusing on bulk shipments of illegal drugs in transit from various



source cities across the United States. We are fortunate to have such a diverse and talented team of law enforcement professionals working to reduce the supply of illegal drugs in our communities.

POLICY BOARD



The Warren County Drug Task Force is governed by a controlling authority known as the Policy Board. The Policy Board consists of the Warren County Sheriff, Warren and Clinton County Prosecutor's, Clearcreek Township Police Department, Franklin Police Department, Hamilton Township Police Department, Lebanon Police Department, Maineville Police Department, Mason Police Department, Springboro Police Department, Waynesville Police Department and the Wilmington Police Department.

Our Policy Board establishes the policies of the Drug Task Force and conducts monthly meetings throughout the year. The Drug Task Force Commander reports directly to the Policy Board and ensures the board remains fully briefed on all Drug Task Force activities.

DRUG TASK FORCE PERSONNEL

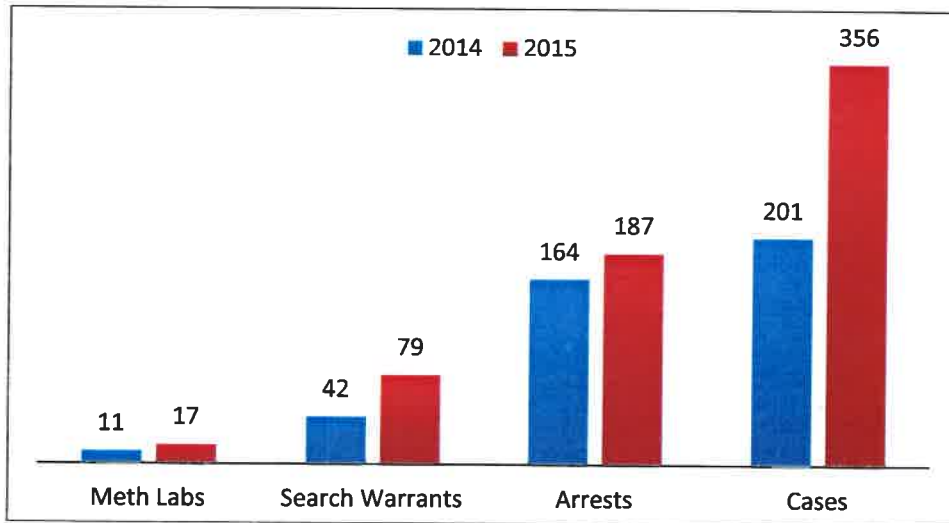


The Warren County Drug Task Force could not operate without the dedicated men and women assigned to our unit. We currently have a staff of 26 law enforcement and support personnel. We would like to thank the following agencies for providing these specially trained, dedicated and professional individuals.

- Warren County Sheriff's Office
- Warren County Prosecutor's Office
- Springboro Police Department
- Lebanon Police Department
- Franklin Police Department
- Wilmington Police Department
- United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)
- Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI)
- Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP)
- Ohio National Guard - Counterdrug Unit

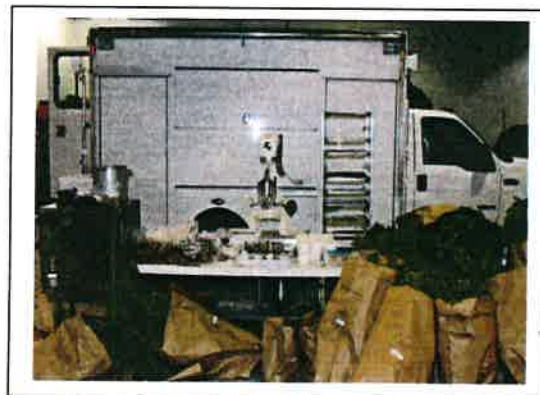
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

In 2015, the Warren County Drug Task Force conducted **356** criminal investigations involving drug trafficking and other drug related crimes. Drug Task Force investigations typically involve the use of specialized techniques and can take months to years to complete. Due to the nature of drug trafficking, our detectives regularly present cases for indictment through Warren County and all surrounding counties in southwest Ohio. In addition, some Drug Task Force investigations are also presented to the Federal Grand Jury for prosecution in United States Federal Court depending on the case. In 2015, Drug Task Force investigations resulted in **187** arrests, **79** search warrants and **17** methamphetamine labs.

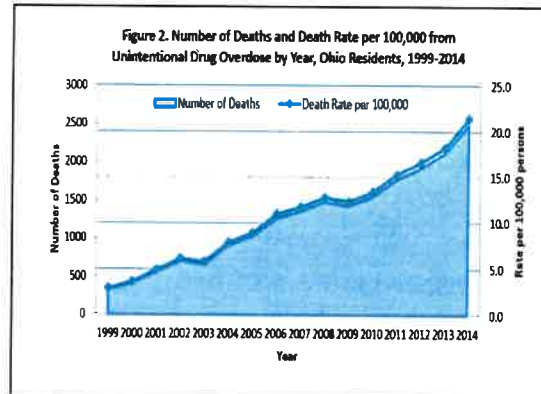


The Warren County Drug Task Force remains the only unit within our combined jurisdictions responsible for specialized drug enforcement operations on a full time basis. This multi-jurisdictional approach is a necessary endeavor as we continue our efforts to reduce the drug trafficking activities and related crimes in our communities. Some of the significant Drug Task Force investigations for 2015 are listed below:

The Drug Task Force executed five separate search warrants in Franklin Township, the City of Franklin, Middletown and Dayton seizing 430 marijuana plants and over 15 gallons of hash oil. Also seized was industrial baking equipment used to support a sophisticated manufacturing operation involving the production of large amounts of THC edibles that include brownies, fudge and cookies. Also seized was a cache of firearms including automatic weapons with serial numbers removed.



The Drug Task Force and the Wilmington Police Department conducted an investigation into a heroin overdose death that resulted in a Manslaughter indictment of a local heroin supplier. This investigation represents one of the first successful cases pursuing drug traffickers that supply heroin to overdose victims.



The Warren County Drug Task Force and DEA conducted an investigation into a Drug Trafficking Organization utilizing the Franklin Truck Stop and a small warehouse in the Middletown area to off-load shipments of cocaine from California. This investigation resulted in the arrest of two individuals and the seizure of 55 Kilos of cocaine.



Multiple search warrants were executed resulting in federal indictments after the investigation of a multi-county, multi-state drug trafficking organization. This criminal organization was responsible for distributing methamphetamine throughout Warren County and southwest Ohio. Task Force detectives conducted multiple undercover purchases of methamphetamine during this investigation and utilized other specialized investigative techniques as they traveled as far away as Georgia during this case.



Drug Task Force detectives completed a several month investigation of a Cincinnati heroin trafficker operating in the Mason/Deerfield Township area. Detectives conducted multiple undercover purchases and ultimately seized over an ounce of heroin.



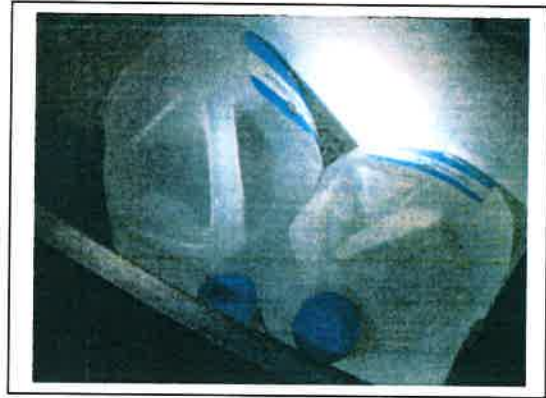
The Warren County Drug Task Force and the Middletown Police Department completed a joint investigation into a mid-level heroin trafficker operating in both jurisdictions. Undercover meetings and drug purchases took place for approximately one year that culminated in the execution of several search warrants, the seizure of a ½ ounce of heroin and approximately \$70,000.00 (cash & bank accounts).



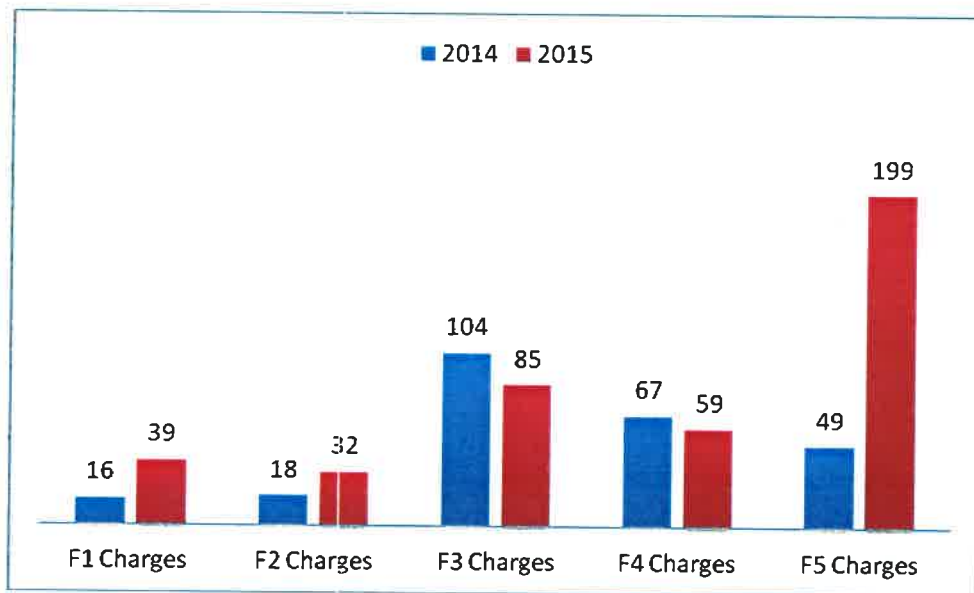
After multiple citizen complaints, the Drug Task Force utilized GPS technology and other covert investigative techniques to target a drug trafficker residing in the City of Lebanon. After several months, detectives coordinated an interdiction stop on I-71 as this individual was returning from his source of supply in the Columbus, Ohio area. Detectives seized one ounce of cocaine during this investigation.



Drug Task Force detectives conducted an undercover operation in the Deerfield Township/Mason area involving a \$10,000.00 purchase of a ½ pound of methamphetamine and 2-gallons of GHB. Three individuals from Georgia were arrested during this investigation. The ultimate street value of these drugs is estimated at approximately \$150,000.00.



Criminal investigations conducted by the Drug Task Force in 2015 resulted in many felony indictments. Although anyone involved in drug trafficking activities may become the focus of a task force investigation, our ultimate goal is to eliminate the largest sources of supply. The below graph indicates a breakdown of felony indictments for 2015 with the Felony 1 being most severe.



EDUCATION & PREVENTION

We continue to support and participate in drug education & prevention efforts throughout our combined jurisdictions. The Drug Task Force recognizes that drug education for our community, especially our youth is extremely important. We are committed to this ongoing process of stopping addiction before it starts and realize that aggressive enforcement efforts alone are insufficient.

We utilize various community events and activities as opportunities to meet with our community as we express our message of being drug free and making good decisions. In 2015, the Drug Task Force attended many activities such as National Night Out in Clearcreek Township and the City of Lebanon as well as several "Touch a Truck" events in Deerfield & Hamilton Townships. We visited many other jurisdictions this year participating in parades and other public settings to engage with our community.

The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to collaborate with the Warren County Educational Services Center and all DARE programs throughout the county. We continue to update our web page with current educational information for parents, teachers and students. Please visit our web page at www.wcdtf.org

CURRENT DRUG TRENDS



Undoubtedly the drug of most concern currently is **heroin**. The total number of accidental overdose deaths related to the abuse of heroin continue to rise at alarming rates. In 2015, the overdose deaths of our combined jurisdictions were reported as 57 indicating an increase of 46% from 2014. Our ongoing focus related to heroin trafficking and abuse continue to uncover the desperate measures taken to feed these horrible addictions. The addition of clandestine fentanyl to heroin is also becoming more and more prevalent. This can add to the potency of heroin, but has also been seen in its pure form, which is 50-100 times more powerful than the pharmaceutical drug, morphine. The investigation into heroin trafficking and abuse is more important now than ever as the devastation and collateral damage of this epidemic become more and more tragic.



The use and abuse of **pharmaceutical drugs** continues to be a large problem in Warren County, the City of Wilmington and all of Southwest Ohio. The abuse of prescription opiates and obvious connection to heroin addiction is more apparent now than ever. Hydrocodone, oxycodone and alprazolam continue to lead the list of abused pharmaceuticals, with street values up to \$1 per milligram.

The Warren County Drug Task Force has one detective devoted solely to pursuing those who violate the law involving prescription drugs. This includes doctor shoppers, forged and altered prescriptions, and the pursuit of health professionals that violate criminal statutes.

Marijuana continues to be the most commonly used illicit drug in our combined jurisdictions and in the United States. The popularity of THC edibles also continues to increase. The use & sale of marijuana concentrates referred to as “wax”, “budder”, “shatter”, “dabs” and “honey oil” are readily available throughout our communities. Many methods are being utilized to manufacture marijuana into concentrates. One method is the butane extraction process. This process is particularly dangerous because it uses highly flammable butane to extract THC from the plant material.



The Warren County Drug Task Force seizes thousands of pounds of marijuana annually during investigations. A portion of the marijuana sold in our area comes from states that have passed legislation for medical marijuana. Mexico also remains a major supplier of marijuana for our area. We have seen a decline in the number of outdoor grow operations, and a large spike in those that now grow indoors. Those growing marijuana indoors have the luxury of a 365 day growing season, they can regulate temperature, moisture and soil content, or hydroponically, without soil. This type of marijuana is very high in THC and demands a very high street value, as much as \$5,000 per pound.

Crystal Methamphetamine is a drug that has become more widespread in our region over the past year or so. Crystal meth, sometimes called “ice” due to its appearance, is highly addictive like the methamphetamine made clandestinely in our area. Crystal methamphetamine however also comes from Mexico, and is either transported by motor vehicle or shipped utilizing a variety of means through package carriers from sources in the western United States.



Methamphetamine is a powerful central nervous system stimulant. It is typically smoked using a pipe, an empty aluminum can, a piece of foil, a broken light bulb or other device.

We continue to investigate the local manufacture of methamphetamine throughout our combined jurisdictions. The most common method of manufacturing methamphetamine locally continues to be the one-pot method, also called the “shake & bake” process. This is extremely dangerous as most of the manufacturing process occurs in one container. Common containers of choice are plastic bottles adding to the potential hazards where incompatible and dangerous chemicals are combined creating violent reactions and extreme pressures. Container failures resulting in fire & explosions are common.



The manufacture of methamphetamine requires the use of pseudoephedrine and other common household items & chemicals such as drain cleaner, lye, cold packs and lithium batteries. The Drug Task Force continues to investigate suspicious purchases of pseudoephedrine tablets and other reports of suspicious activity during meth lab investigations.

RETIREMENTS

On October 23, 2015, Major John J. Burke completed his last day of service with Warren County. Major Burke was hired as the Commander of the Warren County Drug Task Force in 1999 after an impressive 32 year career with the Cincinnati Police Department. Major Burke provided incredible leadership to our team and was a friend and mentor to many. He will be greatly missed and never forgotten. We wish Major Burke and his wife Kathy a happy & healthy retirement after a 48+ year law enforcement career.



On May 29, 2015, Detective Dennis Luken completed his last day of service with Warren County. Detective Luken was hired in 2001 as a Detective assigned to the Warren County Drug Task Force. Prior to his employment with Warren County, Detective Luken had served the Cincinnati Police Department for over 25 years. Detective Luken was considered an expert in the specialty of drug diversion investigations and he will be deeply missed. We wish Detective Luken and his wife Marianne a happy & healthy retirement as well.



THANK YOU!

The Warren County Drug Task Force recognizes that in order to be truly successful in our endeavors, the support and assistance of the general public, our local governmental entities and the Warren County Commissioners is essential. We thank you for your continued support of our ongoing efforts to address drug trafficking and drug related crimes in our communities. We cannot accomplish our mission without your help. Please contact us by email at drugtips@wcdtf.org or using our toll free number at 1-866-307-0070.