

## **Sheriff's Office receives monetary grant to enhance meth scourge fight**

**Port Orchard, Wash.** -- In an effort to continue the law enforcement battle against the endemic methamphetamine trade, the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office recently received a monetary grant from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC).

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the Pierce County Alliance and WASPC are in the process of distributing \$1.4 million dollars in grant funds to law enforcement agencies throughout Washington State.

Kitsap County's share of the funds was set at \$38,878.00.

"The source of the funds is the federal government," stated Washington State Patrol Sgt. Randy Drake, Officer-in-Charge of the West Sound Narcotics Enforcement Team (WestNET). "WASPC receives these monies and channels it to the agencies that apply. This is the second year that we have received the grant. Last year we were awarded approximately \$98,000. Although the amount this year is less, due to budget considerations, any amount is important and is a contributing factor to our success."

WestNET is a multi-jurisdictional narcotics task force under the administrative auspices of the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office. The unit was created in 1990 and is staffed with detectives representing most law enforcement agencies within the county. Task force jurisdiction includes Kitsap and Mason Counties.

"Past use of the grant funds have helped to bolster our surveillance capabilities as well as the means to respond to methamphetamine laboratories, along with other aspects of meth investigations," added Sgt. Drake. "This next year we will use the grant money to replenish certain expendable supplies and for advanced training of our detectives."

WestNET receives one other grant, entitled the 'Byrne Grant.' This grant originates with the Bureau of Justice Assistance and amounts to about \$180,000. These funds are used for operations related to WestNET and the prosecutor's office.

“There is, presently, a downward trend across the country in the number of methamphetamine labs that have been uncovered,” stated Sgt. Drake. “Labs in Kitsap County are down about 20 percent from this time last year.”

“However, the street price of meth has risen dramatically, up 50 to 70 percent,” said Sgt. Drake. “While we’re pleased that meth production appears to be lower, due to stepped-up law enforcement efforts, we’re also very cognizant of the higher demand curve. This drug is very addicting. This is of paramount concern to us; every single dollar that WestNET receives in grant funds is very useful in continuing our efforts to curtail this insidious trade.”

Concerned citizens with information about narcotics-related activity may telephone WestNET at (360) 337-7046. Callers may remain anonymous.

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