



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**DATE:** January 18, 2019    **INCIDENT:** JNET Investigation & Arrests

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

In late 2016, the Lewis County Joint Narcotics Enforcement Team (JNET) and the Drug Enforcement Administration, Tacoma Resident Office, initiated a joint investigation into a criminal organization responsible for trafficking crystal methamphetamine, heroin and firearms throughout Southwest Washington State. This criminal network was built upon prison associations from time incarcerated in Washington State by the organization's members. These associations manifested into a broad network of members fluent in various criminal activities, to include the trafficking of large quantities of methamphetamine, heroin and stolen and/or illicit firearms.

During the course of this investigation, investigators wrote a total of 20 search warrants in Pierce, Thurston, Lewis and Grays Harbor Counties. These warrants led to the arrest of seventeen individuals. Eleven of the arrestees have been charged with violations of federal drug laws by the United States Attorney's Office, Western District of Washington. Additional members of the organization have been charged in Lewis and Thurston County district courts. Each member of the criminal organization had already gathered lengthy criminal histories in Washington State.

To date, law enforcement has seized 23 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine along with dealer quantities of heroin and fentanyl. Additionally, investigators have seized over \$322,641 in currency and/or real property. Law enforcement has also seized approximately 115 firearms, to include numerous illegal assault weapons and more than thirty stolen firearms from local communities.

The most recent investigative efforts have yielded additional arrests and the seizure of large quantities of methamphetamine along with 85 firearms.

This ongoing investigation has been aided by the assistance of the Grays Harbor County Drug Task Force, Thurston County Narcotics Enforcement Team, the Washington State Department of Corrections Fugitive Unit, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms and the Department of Homeland Security.

The following individuals have been charged in the Western District of Washington: Aaron Barge, Dawn Cooper, Torina Lorenzano, Terry Munsell, John McNeal, Martha McNeal, Heath Morris, Stephen Conophy, Brandon Seward, Kathy Pedigo, Brian Colson, as well as five additional members whose cases have yet to be adjudicated.

This investigation is ongoing at this time and there will be no further information released until its conclusion.