

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE HISTORY

In 1986 the Jackson County Missouri Drug Task Force (JCDF) was organized as a multi-jurisdictional investigative initiative in response to an emerging drug problem within the county. Throughout the 1980's, drug trafficking and an active drug culture were a part of daily life throughout Kansas City, Missouri, and much of Jackson County. Illicit drugs, such as crack cocaine, methamphetamine and PCP were openly traded on street corners. Drug houses and methamphetamine labs literally sprung up throughout our County overnight. During its initial years, the JCDF was funded through private donations and one grant.

In 1990 Jackson County residents approved a new quarter-center anti-drug sales tax, which would later become known as the Community Backed Anti-Drug Tax (COMBAT). The tax would support a broad-based attack on drug abuse and drug-related violent crimes. One of the enforcement initiatives COMBAT would fund was the JCDF.

The tax was renewed for a seven-year period in 1995, 2004, 2009 and 2016. The COMBAT tax provided the JCDF with an adjusted budget of \$2,125,153 in 2017.

The JCDF is a voluntary law enforcement organization that operates under the direction of an executive board comprised of representatives from 14 jurisdictions in eastern Jackson County. Eight of these agencies supply manpower for the Task Force, while a Legal Advisor and Fiscal Officer are maintained on a contractual and part-time basis.

- **Blue Springs Police** - 3 Investigators
- **Buckner Police**
- **Grain Valley Police** – 1 Investigator
- **Grandview Police** - 1 Sergeant, 1 Investigator
- **Greenwood Police**
- **Independence Police** – 1 Sergeant, 2 Investigators
- **Jackson County** – 1 OIC, 1 Administrative Personnel, 1 Property Officer
- **Jackson County Sheriff** – 2 Investigators, 1 Warrant Service Officer
- **Lake Lotawana Police**
- **Lee's Summit Police** - 3 Investigators
- **Lone Jack Police**
- **Missouri State Highway Patrol**
- **Oak Grove Police** - 1 Investigator
- **Raytown Police**
- **Sugar Creek Police** - 1 Investigator

The JCDF also has one analyst position on loan from the following:

- **Missouri National Guard** – 1 Analyst (Non-Sworn)

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE HISTORY

The County of Jackson has approximately 604.84 square miles. With a population of 683,191 in the 2014 Census, Jackson County is the second most populous of Missouri's 114 counties, after St. Louis County. The JCDTF primarily focuses on the eastern and southern portions of the county, which includes all suburban jurisdictions and unincorporated areas. The purpose of the JCDTF is to provide a combined and unified response to the drug- and narcotics-related violent crime problem as it exists in eastern Jackson County, Missouri.

While JCDTF participates with all federal, state and local Kansas City-area law enforcement agencies, its primary investigative mission and focus continue to be on the outlying areas of the county, which are not adequately serviced by other agencies. In 2017 the JCDTF participated in an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Department of Homeland Security. These partnerships allowed the JCDTF to be partially reimbursed for narcotics buy money and overtime costs associated with the federal investigations. The JCDTF formed two additional OCDETF investigations in 2017.

In 2011 an agreement was signed with the Missouri National Guard to provide one Intelligence Analyst to assist with long-term investigations. This agreement continued in 2017.

A JCDTF detective obtained a high-level security clearance from the FBI in order to assist in investigations involving large-scale Transnational Criminal Drug Organizations. Additionally, the JCDTF is coordinating with the DEA to address the increasing problem of Local gangs who are obtaining large amounts of illegal drugs from Mexican-based Drug Trafficking Organizations that have set up sophisticated distribution networks in Jackson County.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED/PURCHASED

2017	Marijuana	Methamphetamine	Crack/ Cocaine	MDMA	Heroin	Synthetic	Pills
Pounds	115.6	142.9	0.3	-	1.8	-	
Ounces	3,236.80	4,000.9	4.3	-	397.5	-	
Grams	52,482.2	64,869.8	121.3	17.5	795.0	412.0	1,486.0

VALUE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED/PURCHASED

2017	Marijuana	Methamphetamine	Crack/ Cocaine	MDMA	Heroin	Synthetic	Pills
Value	\$ 703,259	\$ 12,390,170	\$ 16,376	\$ 1,750	\$ 224,985	\$ 5,364	\$ 119,580

TOTAL VALUE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED

Drug values based on adjusted street prices for illegal drugs 2014 National Drug Control Strategy Data

\$13,461,484.00

FIREARMS SEIZED/PURCHASED



Long Guns \$200 / each	Hand Guns \$400 / each
22	45
\$4,400	\$18,000



STATISTICS

	Cases Opened	Cases Closed	Search Warrants	Knock-n-Talks	Presentations	Narcotics Purchased	Money Recovered	Meth Labs Processed	Marijuana Grows Processed
2010	149	67	71	78	6	178	\$140,602	7	8
2011	201	32	42	56	12	127	\$111,134	4	1
2012	124	206	73	66	10	180	\$411,048	1	3
2013	119	173	92	30	21	408	\$275,876	0	3
2014	74	208	48	48	1	158	\$424,762	0	2
2015	127	199	58	82	1	218	\$330,372	0	1
2016	132	301	61	21	4	170	\$136,261	1	0
2017	92	114	50	10	9	140	\$135,475	0	0

CASE COMPARISON

	Total Cases Presented	Federal Cases	State Cases	Arrests	Warrant Arrests	Defectives Funded	Value of Seized Narcotics
2010	52	5	47	227		14	\$1,054,321
2011	271	186	85	244		14	\$4,871,131
2012	339	250	89	427		13	\$4,116,215
2013	205	128	65	177		11	\$7,568,018
2014	204	106	98	209		11	\$8,894,042
2015	216	122	82	262	225	12	\$6,530,240
2016	290	215	75	292	222	13	\$5,218,156
2017	213	166	47	269	200	11	\$13,461,484

PROSECUTION COMPARISON
2010 – 2017
Cases presented for prosecution

Federal						
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
186	250	128	106	122	215	166

State						
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
85	89	65	98	82	75	47

2017 DRUG COMPLAINT REPORT

During 2015, the Jackson County Drug Task Force received a total of 56 Drug Complaints. The following table is a statistical breakdown of the complaint location by jurisdiction and the sources from whom the complaints were received.

Jurisdiction	Number of Complaints Received	%	Source of Received Complaints	%
Blue Springs	5	8.6%		
Buckner	1	1.7%		
Grain Valley	1	1.7%		
Grandview	24	41.4%		
Greenwood	3	5.2%		
Independence	9	15.5%		
Jackson County	0	0		
Kansas City, MO	5	8.6%		
Lake Lotawana	1	1.7%		
Lake Tapawingo	0	0		
Lee's Summit	1	1.7%		
Lone Jack	0	0		
Oak Grove	3	5.2%		
Raytown	2	3.4%		
Sibley	0	0		
Sugar Creek	3	5.2%		
Tarsney Lake	0	0		
COMBAT				
Confidential Informant			0	
Facebook			2	3.4%
Task Force Phone Tips			15	25.9%
Outside Agencies			24	41.4%
Tips Hotline			13	22.4%
Combat			4	6.9%

Jackson County Drug Task Force Receives Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area 2016 Outstanding Cooperative Effort Award

The Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) was established in December 1996. It is one of 28 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) in the United States. The Midwest HIDTA is comprised of 72 designated counties in Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Illinois, making it one of the largest HIDTAs in the country. The Midwest HIDTA currently supports 57 initiatives, including 40 drug task forces, six domestic highway interdiction programs, six intelligence initiatives, two prevention initiatives and three support initiatives.

In April 2017 the Jackson County Drug Task Force was recognized by the Office of National Drug Control Policy as the recipient of the Midwest HIDTA 2016 Outstanding Cooperative Effort Award. This award recognizes multi-agency cooperation and coordination among Federal, State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies.

The HIDTA awards recognize Drug Task Forces that have achieved outstanding success while adhering to the main tenets of the HIDTA program.

The principle criterion for the Outstanding Cooperative Effort Award is the investigation's disruption/dismantlement of a major drug-trafficking organization. The following areas are addressed in support of the nomination:

- Cooperative effort among Federal, State and Local Agencies;
- Nature and scope of activities of the targeted DTO;
- Key investigative steps taken in dismantling/disrupting the DTO, including innovative investigative techniques;
- Key success achieved against the DTO, including significant seizures arrests and indictments, especially against the organization's command and control hierarchy;
- Derivative cases that have occurred as a result of the investigative effort.

MIDWEST HIDTA

2016 Awards



April 2017

Outstanding Cooperative Effort Jackson County Drug Task Force

Beginning in 2007 and carrying into the present, Suspect 1, and a group of known associates were suspected to be involved in hundreds of burglaries in and around the Kansas City metropolitan area. During the investigation into the burglaries Detectives with the Independence CCU learned that suspect 1 was also involved in the use and distribution of methamphetamine. Detectives and Agents from Independence CCU and DEU, Kansas City, Missouri CCU, DEU, IFS, the ATF and the JCDF began an investigation into him for his involvement in the burglaries and the distribution of methamphetamine. The investigation identified and prosecuted numerous individuals who were involved in a violent drug trafficking organization.

This recommendation was submitted in recognition of the interactive, cooperative spirit brought to a significant methamphetamine investigation worked jointly by the Jackson County Drug Task Force (JCDF), the Independence, Missouri Police Career Criminal (CCU), Drug Enforcement (DEU), Tactical Unit (SWAT), the Kansas City, Missouri Police Career Criminal Unit (CCU), Drug Enforcement (DEU), Street Narcotics Unit (SNU), Illegal Firearms Unit (IFS), Tactical Unit (TAC), the Kansas City, Kansas Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and the National Guard Missouri Counter Drug Operations Group. These agencies worked tirelessly to pursue and prosecute Eric LOOKER, who was identified as the leader of a criminal enterprise that conducted burglaries and distributed methamphetamine in and around the Kansas City metropolitan area. The investigation utilized undercover purchases of methamphetamine, air and ground surveillance, GPS trackers, remote electronic surveillance, telephone toll and real time phone analysis.

SIGNIFICANT INVESTIGATIONS

It should be noted that these are not all of the cases investigated, but some of the more noteworthy.

OORGANIZED CRIME DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE OPERATION “Déjà Vu” OPERATION “Trailer Park Boys”

In July 2016 the Jackson County Drug Task Force (JCDF) and the Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) Kansas City District Office initiated an investigation targeting the Rodriguez drug-trafficking organization (DTO), which was responsible for the distribution of 60 to 120 pounds of methamphetamine per month in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Working jointly, personnel from the two Midwest HIDTA Initiatives conducted numerous undercover purchases, hundreds of hours of surveillance and eight Title IIIs aimed at disrupting and dismantling this DTO. Through the investigation, it was determined that the DTO was operating in numerous states, as well as Mexico. The investigation also resulted in two “spin-off” investigations targeting multi-pound methamphetamine DTOs that were also operating in the Kansas City metro area. During August 2017, 20 defendants were federally indicted on 52 counts of drug and firearms violations. To date, this investigation has resulted in the federal indictment of 40 defendants on 73 charges and the seizure of approximately 210 pounds of methamphetamine, 14 handguns and soft body armor.

During July 2016, the JCDF and DEA initiated an investigation into the activities of the Rodriguez DTO operating in the Kansas City, Missouri/Kansas Metropolitan area. Detectives/Agents determined the DTO was responsible for the distribution of between 60 and 120 pounds of methamphetamine per month in the Kansas City metropolitan area, as well as supplying methamphetamine to known violent local gangs. During the investigation Detectives/Agents determined that members and affiliates of the DTO were operating in Mexico, California, Arizona, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois and Ohio, as well as other transit states. Detectives/Agents interviewed dozens of potential witnesses and defendants, conducted hundreds of hours of physical surveillance and utilized various electronic surveillance techniques to further the investigation. Based on the Detectives/Agents investigative efforts, this case was designated as an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDEF) investigation in the District of Kansas, Operation Déjà Vu.

Multiple sophisticated surveillance techniques were authorized by the court. Additionally, Detectives/Agents coordinated with federal, state and local agencies to coordinate the investigation and out-of-state interdiction operations. Over the course of the investigation Detectives/Agents coordinated 15 controlled purchases of methamphetamine resulting in the purchase of approximately 13 pounds of methamphetamine. Detectives/Agents were able to coordinate the interdiction of

numerous vehicles that were transporting methamphetamine for distribution in the Kansas City metropolitan area, as well as several vehicles in other states transporting methamphetamine into Jackson County and the Kansas City metropolitan area for distribution. Detectives/Agents seized approximately 72 pounds of methamphetamine from various members or affiliates pursuant to Operation "Déjà Vu," with an additional 106 pounds of methamphetamine seized during out-of-state interdiction operations.

Operation "Déjà Vu" led to two separate "spin off" investigations, including the OCDETF Operation "Trailer Park Boys," also investigated by the JCDF and DEA. Operation "Trailer Park Boys" is an active investigation, and to date has resulted in 10 arrests and the seizure of eight guns, soft body armor and approximately nine pounds of methamphetamine. Another "spin off" from Operation "Déjà Vu" identified a local DTO that was distributing at least 10 pounds of methamphetamine a week in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Additionally, the DTO supplied multiple pounds of methamphetamine to various cities in western Missouri, St. Louis, Missouri and Nebraska. This DTO, headed by a female, was determined to be involved in at least one homicide in St. Joseph, Missouri and possibly a second homicide in Liberty, Missouri. At the time of this writing, the possible homicide victim in the Liberty case cannot be located. The Liberty Police Department is investigating the victim's disappearance and has officially classified the case as a missing person's case. Detectives/Agents are actively working with the respective agencies in these investigations.

Due to the violence associated with this "spin off," DTO Detectives/Agents coordinated the arrest of key individuals within the organization. Arrests/interdiction stops were conducted in Cameron, Missouri, Independence, Missouri and St. Louis, Missouri. These efforts resulted in the arrest of seven suspects and the seizure of six guns, soft body armor and approximately 10 pounds of methamphetamine.

In August 2017 the Grand Jury in the Western District of Missouri returned indictments charging 20 defendants in Operation "Déjà Vu" with 52 counts of various drug and firearm crimes. Three other defendants were charged when arrest/search warrants were executed. To date, this investigation has resulted in the federal indictment of 40 defendants on 73 charges and the seizure of approximately 210 pounds of methamphetamine, soft body armor and 14 handguns. Though Detectives/Agents have disrupted this DTO, the investigation is on-going and additional charges are expected. Leads from this investigation have led to investigations in the above mentioned states and are being followed up on by the DEA and/or local law enforcement agencies.

This case is a shining example of the Jackson County Drug Task Force longstanding commitment to the disruption of violent DTO's throughout the region. The joint collaborative contributions of Law Enforcement Agencies working together in furtherance of the overall objectives cannot be overstated.

**JACKSON COUNTY
DRUG TASK FORCE**

2017

PRESS RELEASE

Posted on: February 15, 2017

Jackson County Drug Task Force Completes Successful Drug Trafficking Investigation

Ten KC-Area Residents Indicted for Meth Conspiracy

KANSAS CITY, MO (Feb. 15, 2017) – The Jackson County Drug Task Force, in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has announced the completion of a successful investigation of a large-scale methamphetamine distribution network operating in Jackson County, Missouri.

The investigation, which was designated as an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force case (OCDETF), resulted in the Dec. 16, 2016 announcement of indictments of 10 Kansas City, Mo.-area defendants by a federal grand jury for their roles in a conspiracy to distribute at least 100 pounds of methamphetamine.

“We are proud to announce this investigation has disrupted the supply of more than \$3 million worth of illegal methamphetamine to Jackson County,” said Dan Cummings, officer-in-charge of the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Cummings said that the nearly year-long investigation resulted in the seizure of more than 20 pounds of methamphetamine from a vehicle, in addition to packages of methamphetamine being delivered to Jackson County locations via U.S. mail and FedEx delivery. Over the course of the investigation, detectives recovered over 66 pounds of methamphetamine and coordinated 15 controlled purchases of methamphetamine from seven separate defendants.

In December 2016, the Grand Jury in the Western District of Missouri returned indictments charging 10 defendants with 30 counts of various drug, firearms and financial crimes including:

- Conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine/cocaine/heroin
- Possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine/cocaine/heroin
- Conspiracy to commit money laundering
- Possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking offense
- Illegal alien in possession of a firearm
- Use of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence
- Immigration violations.

The investigation revealed details of a large-scale transnational criminal organization. Detectives found multiple wire transfers of cash to Mexico, travel expenses with travel to Paris, Dubai, Rome and New York for the main defendant and his wife, and the cash purchase of numerous residences in the metropolitan area. Cash bank deposits and wire transfers of cash to Mexico were in excess of \$713,000.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades. It was investigated by the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Ten residents indicted for \$5.4 million meth conspiracy

DECEMBER 15, 2017 BY [POST STAFF](#) 0 COMMENTS



KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Ten area residents have been indicted by a federal grand jury for their roles in a \$5.4 million conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

According to a news release, Tom Larson, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, made the announcement Friday.

Michaela Joanne Hernandez, 36, of Raymore, Mo., Brandy Michael Morgan, 44, of Kansas City, Mo., Anthony Dewayne Fifer, 46, of Mexico, Mo., Sharmyn Leanne Shryock, 27, and Jeffery Allen Jennings, 31, both of St. Joseph, Mo., Charlsie Kim Harris, 33, of Garden City, Mo., Eric Edward Ballard, 25, and Linda Kay Ballard, 65, both of Atchison, Kan., Brian Joe Russell, 36, of Amazonia, Mo., and Adrian Leon Madrigal, 27, address unknown, were charged in a five-count indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury on Nov. 16, 2017. The indictment has been unsealed following the arrests and initial court appearances of some of the defendants.

The federal indictment alleges that all 10 co-defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine from Jan. 1, 2015, to Nov. 16, 2017. The indictment alleges the distribution of more than 321 kilograms of methamphetamine during the conspiracy. The five co-defendants are also charged together in one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering in connection with the drug-trafficking conspiracy.

In addition to the conspiracy counts, Hernandez is charged with one count of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, one count of possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and one count of being a felon in possession of firearms and ammunition. Hernandez allegedly was in possession of a Springfield Armory 9mm handgun and a loaded Taurus 9mm handgun between April 1 and Oct. 14, 2017.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Hernandez has a prior felony conviction for possession of a controlled substance.

The indictment also contains a forfeiture allegation, which would require all 10 co-defendants to forfeit to the government any property derived from the proceeds of the alleged drug-trafficking conspiracy, including a money judgment of \$5.4 million. This represents the amount of money received in exchange for the unlawful distribution of methamphetamine, the indictment says, based on an approximate sale price of \$600 per ounce and distribution of at least 9,000 ounces (approximately 321.4 kilograms) of methamphetamine.

Larson said that the charges contained in this indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Plattsburg, Mo., Police Department; the Atchison County, Kan., Sheriff's Department; the Buchanan County Drug Strike Force and Sheriff's Department; the Jackson County Drug Task Force; the Clinton County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; the Missouri State Highway Patrol; the Cass County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; and the Clay County Drug Task Force.

Drug Trends in Jackson County



Methamphetamine continues to be a problem in the Metropolitan area. It is readily available, user prices are reasonable, and purity levels are acceptable. Local production of methamphetamine has decreased significantly in Jackson County, but continues to be a concern from both an enforcement aspect and as a public safety issue.

Methamphetamine Labs							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Jackson County	7	7	1	0	0	0	0
Missouri	1960	2096	1571	1105	800	507	207

Jackson County is seeing a decrease in methamphetamine clandestine laboratories. Missouri, however, is still listed as eighth among the 50 states in the number of methamphetamine laboratory incidents recorded in the United States. The JCDTF works hand-in-hand with most local pharmacies to all for the strict and real-time enforcement of individuals attempting to obtain pseudoephedrine to be utilized in the clandestine production of methamphetamine. This partnership with the community and community businesses has resulted in the significant decrease in methamphetamine laboratories in Jackson County.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice 2015 National Drug Assessment report the majority of methamphetamine available in the United States is Mexico-produced. It is highly pure, potent and increasingly available.

In Jackson County, methamphetamine is brought into the area in large quantities from California, Texas and the Southwest border states with the original source being drug-trafficking organizations from Mexico. These Mexican drug traffickers tend to work in both cells and structured groups. These groups can be and are penetrated with longer-term investigations. The leaders of these organizations predominantly have no ties to the area or the United States. Thus, they are flight risks. Members of the organization use multiple identities in an effort to confuse authorities. Intelligence information has been received that some wholesalers come to the area to deal large amounts of methamphetamine for a short period of time, makingt what money they can and then leaving the area.

Cocaine and Crack Cocaine are available throughout the metropolitan area. Indications are that cocaine will continue to be a problem because the incoming amounts translate to a product that is relatively affordable and easily procured. Crack and powder cocaine are prevalent in Eastern Jackson County, and together are judged to be the number three and four drugs of choice behind marijuana and methamphetamine. Generally, cocaine powder is brought into the metropolitan area from Texas, the Southwest border states and California by Mexican drug- trafficking organizations. These organizations use a variety of transportation techniques depending on the amount they are bringing in. Once here, the drug is either sold in powder form or converted to crack. Cocaine abuse ranges from casual users of powder to those addicted to crack and other narcotics. Retail distributors are usually found to be individuals associated with groups who have ties to Mexican drug-trafficking organizations. These drug-trafficking organizations have direct ties to out-of-state and international sources. Enforcement efforts and cooperative investigations have been and continue to be successful against dealers, wholesalers and importers. Any investigation into individuals or smaller groups always focuses on moving up the distribution chain.



Heroin is becoming more prevalent and available within the metropolitan area, including eastern Jackson County, and is being seen on a more regular basis. Dealers are frequently individuals who possess and sell only small amounts. Many of the dealers and abusers know each other and operate as a small subculture.



Marijuana is readily available in all areas of Jackson County. It is the most abused and preferred drug in the area, and has commonly been referred to as a “gateway drug”. Marijuana is commonly found to be used in combination with other drugs and/or narcotics.

The source for imported marijuana is usually the Southwest border states and California. Mexican organizations bring it across the US border for distribution with other drugs, such as methamphetamine and cocaine. Over the past few years, more imported marijuana is being seized throughout the metropolitan area from states where marijuana possession and use have been legalized.

In the suburban/residential areas cultivation, for the most part, is in small indoor grow operations. In rural settings, outside the metropolitan area, marijuana is grown in large outdoor plots. Mexican cartels have imported marijuana growers into rural areas and established large outdoor grow operations. Enforcement of grow operations focuses on destruction of the plants and prosecution of the offender, usually at the state level when there are no extenuating circumstances or other crimes.

Designer Synthetic drugs are chemically-laced substances similar to marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine. Based on their chemical makeup, these drugs are commonly divided into two categories, Cannabinoids and Cathinones.

Cannabinoids, commonly known as “K2” or “spice,” are chemically formulated versions of synthetic marijuana that consist of a laboratory-manufactured tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). This synthetic drug can contain a vast range of chemical formulations and potencies that can be 200 to 500 times stronger than THC. Synthetic cannabinoids were originally developed in the early 2000s to facilitate pharmacological studies. In 2005

they began appearing in synthetic mixtures used to make drugs often referred to as synthetic cannabis. This was the start of a trend of newly created recreational designer drugs in European countries. In 2009 importation into the United States and Canada began. The appearance is very similar to marijuana and composed of a brown, leafy plant material sprayed with the synthetic mixture. Once dried, it is packaged for sale and labeled “Not for human consumption”.

Cathinones, often known as “bath salts,” contain chemical compounds that mimic the effects of cocaine or methamphetamine. Bath salts are a powdered drug that contains at least one amphetamine type substance. Typically, that is methylenedioxy-pyrovalerone, known as MDPV. It can also be methylone or mephedrone. As with any designer drug, the composition of each batch can vary and the drug can be smoked, snorted or injected. Bath salts are commonly marketed as plant food and labeled “not for human consumption” in order to circumvent laws governing the supply of pharmaceuticals.

These designer drugs are extremely dangerous because individual buyers do not know what chemicals they are ingesting.

Designer drugs are commonly sold under the counter at gas stations, convenience stores, and tobacco and smoke shops throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area and Jackson County.

The belief that any product manufactured with synthetic cannabinoids is legal is **FALSE**. To date, all products containing either of these substances are regulated under Schedule II of the Controlled Drug and Substances Act.

A coordinated investigation targeting the synthetic drug industry in 2013-14 involved more than 100 undercover purchases of synthetic drugs at more than 30 locations. Subsequently, Jackson County and the Kansas City metropolitan area experienced a noticeable decline in the sales of synthetic drugs.



Psilocybin mushroom seemed to decline in popularity during the past year. The temporary rise in grow operations seems to have discontinued. Psilocybin mushrooms are not widely available on the open market at this time, indicating that abuse is not widespread.

MDMA/Ecstasy and LSD is available in Eastern Jackson County. This is a concern because MDMA/Ecstasy and LSD users tend to be high school and college youths. Both of these drugs are known to be used at popular parties called “raves” and in club settings. Manufacture of these drugs involves a complex chemical process, and there is no known production in the area. LSD is imported from California in a variety of different methods. MDMA/Ecstasy is manufactured and imported from outside the US. LSD has been encountered in sporadic instances, but it does not appear to hold the popularity or availability it once had in the area.

PCP (phencyclidine) is recognized as an extremely dangerous drug due to its psychological effect on users. PCP is often applied to marijuana and smoked. In previous years availability ranged from somewhat limited in Eastern Jackson County to easily obtainable in the center of the metropolitan area. Over the past year PCP is becoming more easily available in Eastern Jackson County.

OxyContin, Vicodin and other prescribed pharmaceutical drugs are commonly abused in Jackson County. Diversion occurs through fraudulent prescriptions, “doctor shopping,” robberies and burglaries. Abusers and dealers consist of individuals and/or groups of individuals. Although not typically formed into organized groups, some of these individuals are beginning to form small networks for the purpose of distributing and selling the various pharmaceuticals. In several recent cases, the suppliers are individuals who have obtained legitimate 30-day prescriptions, which they in turn sell to the dealers at a drastic mark-up. The dealers then sell the product at three to four times their initial costs. Prescription drug abuse is on the rise and one of the main reasons Heroin use is on the rise.

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE COMMITMENT

Jackson County is a primary market area for production, distribution and abuse of dangerous drugs. Although progress has been made in many areas, continued vigilance, enforcement, treatment and education are required. The Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue its successful tradition through community partnerships and a united cooperative effort against illegal narcotics.

Although limited by financial and personnel constraints, the Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue to provide the citizens of these communities the professional service that they deserve and have come to expect. The members of this Task Force have made a commitment to this office, the law enforcement profession and the citizens of this community that no information concerning the illegal sales of narcotics will go without proper investigation. With that in mind, we will strive to continue to improve on the quality of service to this community.

The Jackson County Drug Task Force actively solicits tips and information regarding all illegal narcotics activity. Should the information be related to a jurisdiction outside of Jackson County, personnel from this office will ensure the information is passed on to the proper investigative agency. Individuals having information to pass on may contact this office through phone-in complaints at 816-655-DRUG, via the Jackson County, Missouri Web Site, jacksongov.org, or through the TIPS hotline, 816- 474-TIPS.