



October 1, 2009

ALERT takes down marijuana grow operation with ties to organized crime

Medicine Hat... Eight people have been arrested and over 1,900 marijuana plants have been seized in a major marijuana grow operation bust in the Medicine Hat area that is believed to have ties to organized crime. The arrests stem from an investigation by the ALERT Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU) and Integrated Intelligence Unit in Medicine Hat.

“Last week ALERT put a major cocaine operator out of business, and this investigation has shut down a significant grow op,” says Fred Lindsay, Alberta Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. “The success of Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams is having a real impact and making Alberta communities significantly safer. This integrated policing model is clearly effective, and I look forward to seeing more busts like this in the future.”

Acting on a tip from the community about suspicious activity on a rural property, investigators began a two-month investigation. Following that investigation, CFSEU, assisted by the RCMP Emergency Response Team, the Redcliff and Brooks RCMP detachments, the Southern Alberta Marijuana Investigative Team (SAMIT), and the Calgary Police Service, conducted a number of search warrants. On September 25, searches were conducted on a residence in Calgary along with a rural acreage property located approximately one hour northeast of Medicine Hat. On September 26, another rural acreage property located approximately 10 minutes west of Redcliff was searched.

As a result of these searches, investigators have seized:

- over 1,900 marijuana plants, at various stages of growth, with a potential street value of over \$2.4 million;
- over \$500,000 worth of grow related property and equipment;
- over \$70,000 in cash; and
- over \$1.1 million worth of real estate.

Police have charged eight adults with a number of drug production, possession and trafficking offences.

“The real victory with this investigation is that, to the best of our knowledge, this operation was dismantled before any drugs were sold and distributed in our communities,” said Inspector Glen Motz, officer in charge of the Medicine Hat CFSEU. “It reminds us how valuable it is for citizens to step forward and report suspicious activity and it shows the success that can be achieved through integrated policing partnerships”.

The Medicine Hat CFSEU is an integrated police team made up of investigators from the Medicine Hat Police Service and the RCMP. CFSEU is part of the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT), an umbrella organization established by the Alberta government to bring together Alberta's most sophisticated law enforcement resources to strategically tackle serious and organized crime.

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Backgrounder: photos and names of charged attached

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