



August 3, 2010

ALERT dismantles \$4.8-million outdoor marijuana grow operation

Drumheller... Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) has shut down a large outdoor marijuana grow operation on a rural property located north of Drumheller.

The bust, the single largest one in Alberta so far this year, resulted in the seizure of 3,854 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of \$4.8-million. If grown to maturity, these plants had the potential to produce nearly two million marijuana joints.

ALERT's Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit-Medicine Hat is leading the investigation into this case. The ALERT unit is made up of officers from the Medicine Hat Police Service and RCMP.

The grow operation, which was housed in 10 greenhouses, was about one to two weeks away from being harvested. A typical marijuana grow operation takes 16 to 18 weeks to cultivate.

"Despite its size, this grow operation was fairly low tech," said Sgt. Jason Graham, a member of CFSEU – Medicine Hat. "In Alberta, most grows are found indoors and supported by sophisticated lighting systems and stolen electricity and water. This one relied solely on the sun and a garden hose."

During the raid, ALERT was assisted by Drumheller RCMP, RCMP Drug Section and RCMP Emergency Response Team. ALERT investigators from Calgary were also mobilized, including members of Green Team South.

Investigators executed the search warrant at approximately 2 a.m. on Aug. 1. No persons were found on the rural property at the time the search warrant was executed, and the investigation is still on-going.

Drumheller RCMP first became aware of the grow operation after receiving a tip from the public.

ALERT is an umbrella organization established by the Government of Alberta to bring together the province's most sophisticated law enforcement resources to tackle serious and organized crime. Close to 400 municipal police, RCMP and sheriffs work collaboratively for ALERT.

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