



*January 20, 2009*

## **ALERT takes down marijuana grow operation near Westlock**

*Edmonton...* A large marijuana grow operation, one week away from being harvested, was located this morning south of Westlock by ALERT's Green Team North. A total of 1,729 marijuana plants with an estimated combined street value of \$2-million were seized from a rural property in the county of Barrhead.

"This bust shuts down a major drug operation in the Westlock / Barrhead area and will have a real impact on the safety of that community," said Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security Frank Oberle. "ALERT's integrated teams continue to do an excellent job getting drugs off our streets and reducing crime in Alberta."

Investigators have also seized \$30,000 worth of marijuana growing equipment and three stolen items worth approximately \$120,000: a 1999 Dodge Ram pick-up truck, a skid-steer loader, and a diesel generator used to help power the grow operation.

ALERT'S Green Team was assisted by Westlock and Barrhead RCMP members, along with the RCMP's canine unit. Two weapons were found on the property, including a loaded rifle and a shotgun. The marijuana grow operation was located in a residence and a metal Quonset hut on the property.

The marijuana grow operation had the potential to yield about 865,000 marijuana joints. A typical marijuana grow operation takes about 16 to 18 weeks to cultivate.

Darren Moore, 37, was arrested without incident at the property. He faces several charges, including drug and stolen property offences, along with various firearm offences.

The investigation is ongoing but more arrests are not expected.

The Green Team North is an integrated police team made up of investigators from the Edmonton Police Service and the RCMP who specialize in marijuana grow operation investigations. It is part of the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT), an umbrella organization established by the Government of Alberta to bring together Alberta's most sophisticated law enforcement resources to strategically tackle serious and organized crime.

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