

February 27, 2007

## **NARCOTICS TASK FORCE RECOGNIZED**

BISMARCK – Members of the Metro Area Safe Trails Task Force received Outstanding Cooperative Effort awards from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The awards were presented by Dave Barton, Director of Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program in recognition of the cooperative efforts of the multi-jurisdictional task force. This is the second consecutive year the Metro Area task force has received national recognition for its efforts.

“The Metro Area task force members make a great team. It takes team effort to take down a drug trafficking organization, and the task force knows how best to use every available state, federal, and local resource to take out the dealers and get drugs off the streets. This task force gets the job done, and done well,” said Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem.

The task force conducted an extensive fifteen-month investigation of a drug trafficking operation in Bismarck, coordinating the efforts of state, federal, and local agencies. The multi-jurisdictional investigation led to the arrest and prosecution of twenty individuals and the dismantling of one of the largest and most successful drug trafficking organizations ever encountered in North Dakota. The task force determined the organization had generated over two million dollars from street level sales of crystal methamphetamine, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, oxycontin, and other illicit drugs during the span of its activities in North Dakota. Agents also seized assets valued in excess of \$100,000.

Londell White and Michael Kopp, father and son ringleaders of the organization, and eight subordinates were charged and pled guilty in federal court but have not yet been sentenced. The other ten individuals, who were lower down in the drug organization, were charged and have pled guilty in Burleigh county district court.

The Metro Area task force is comprised of agents and officers from the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Mandan Police Department, Morton County Sheriff's Department, Bismarck Police Department, Burleigh County Sheriff's Department, North Dakota Parole and Probation, Federal Bureau of Investigations, and North Dakota Army National Guard.

###