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Richard C. Scholl
Sheriff/Coroner

MONO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Ralph Obenberger
Undersheriff

To: All News Outlets
From: Jennifer Hansen, Public Information Officer
Date: February 3, 2010
RE: MONET Investigation comes to a close

On January 28, 2010 the Mono Narcotic Enforcement Team (MONET) concluded a 3 month investigation surrounding the sales and cultivation of marijuana in the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

On the above date, MONET agents served two search warrants and arrest warrants at two separate residences. During the first search warrant, 20 year old Andrew Ayala of Mammoth Lakes was taken into custody for multiple counts of sales of marijuana and cultivation of marijuana.

During the search warrant agents discovered a bedroom that was converted into a complex hydroponic marijuana grow room. The grow site contained 40 mature marijuana plants with a street value of approximately \$40,000. In addition to the plants, agents seized just less than 1 pound of processed marijuana and \$900 in currency.

Mr. Ayala did possess a medicinal marijuana recommendation. This problem is prevalent throughout the State with the ease of obtaining a medicinal marijuana recommendation. Narcotic agents are targeting those individuals who are misusing the medicinal marijuana defense in order to profit from the illegal cultivation and illegal sales of marijuana. MONET utilized the assistance of the Fire Department and Building Inspector due to the modified, unsafe, out of code electrical work and mold spores growing on the walls and floor throughout the room. This is a very common occurrence when agents deal with these indoor grows. It is a hazard to the residents, neighbors, and officers. These dwellings are typically rentals in which the property owner must pay thousands of dollars in clean up.

During the second search warrant, agents arrested 19 year old Mammoth Lakes resident Fernando Leo for sales of marijuana. During the search warrant agents recovered one firearm. MONET again utilized the assistance of the Fire Department and Building Inspector due to the condition of the residence. This residence was found to be unsafe and uninhabitable and sealed for no entry.

The law requires that arrest information be made available to the public. This publication may contain suspect information about individuals booked by the Mono County Sheriff's Department recently. Names of juveniles (under 18-years-old) are not public. Suspect information and ongoing investigation details are also withheld. Since most cases have yet to be adjudicated, all charges should be considered allegations. For questions/concerns regarding any information contained in this publication, contact Undersheriff Ralph Obenberger at (760) 932-7549.