



Gulf Coast HIDTA 2010 Annual Report

Executive Summary

A. Introduction

The United States Congress created the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program in 1989. The program's mission is to disrupt the market for illegal drugs in the United States by facilitating federal, state and local law enforcement efforts to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking organizations, with particular emphasis on regions that have harmful effects on other parts of the country. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) through a National HIDTA Director administers the program.

In December 1996, counties and parishes within the states of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi were designated as the Gulf Coast (GC) HIDTA. In February 2008, ONDCP added four counties within the state of Arkansas as part of the GC HIDTA. In 2010, the GC HIDTA received authorization from ONDCP to add Shelby County Tennessee. With this initiative commencing operations in January 2011, the GC HIDTA now includes 26 counties/parishes within a five-state area.

Calendar Year (CY) 2010 statistical accomplishments show significant improvement over CY 2009 in a number of areas. Enforcement initiatives disrupted or dismantled 228 drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) and money-laundering organizations (MLOs) operating in its designated areas and beyond. Although we missed our projected target by 4 %, this statistic is extremely impressive considering the majority of all initiatives were focused on international and multi-state organizations. As a result of increased focus on the most serious DTOs, in 2010 GC HIDTA initiatives disrupted or dismantled 159 DTOs which were international or multi-state in scope. The number of local

DTOs disrupted or dismantled decreased by 5%, and represent only 30% of all DTOs and MLOs addressed. The Gulf Coast HIDTA continues to be among the most effective among all HIDTAs in the number of DTOs disrupted or dismantled.

Equally impressive was the success in removing the profits obtained by DTOs through their illegal activities. In 2010, GC HIDTA initiatives seized over \$29 million in assets from drug traffickers in U.S. currency, real property, jewelry, weapons and other items of value, a 3.5% increase in asset seizures.

During CY 2010, the GC HIDTA continued its support of the Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) program sponsored by ONDCP. The program's goal is to coordinate and enhance highway enforcement activities among participating law enforcement agencies. The GC HIDTA Investigative Support Network assisted DHE efforts throughout the 11-state southeast region and served as the central collection point for statistical data generated by participating agencies and provided critical roadside support to patrol officers.

The GC HIDTA continues to be a valued partner in the law enforcement community within its designated counties and parishes. Perhaps the finest example of the efficiency and effectiveness of the program in these difficult economic and budgetary times is return-on-investment. In 2010, the GC HIDTA realized a combined return-on-investment of \$18.92 for every funding dollar. It should be noted that this figure is based on wholesale value of drugs. In prior years the value of drugs seized were reported by this HIDTA based on retail value. Despite this fact, the GC

HIDTA exceeded its ROI of 2009. This clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the program.

B. Background

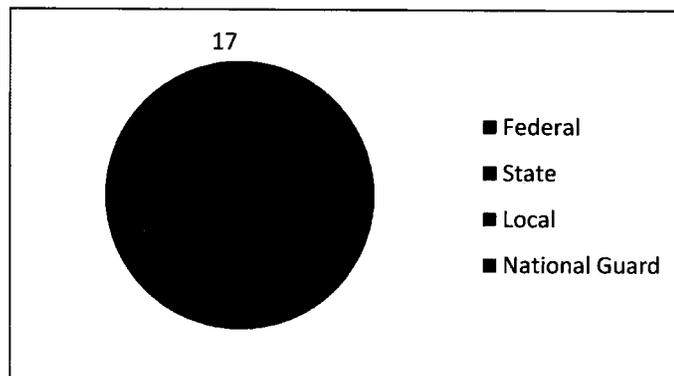
The Gulf Coast HIDTA is situated between major importation centers along the Southwest Border and lucrative distribution markets on the East Coast and in the Midwest. This has resulted in significant illicit transportation activity including drugs and aliens by DTOs on our interstate highway system. These same organizations transport illicit proceeds of their enterprise in bulk cash and weapons to the Mexican border. The interstate highway system that traverses the four states, including I-10, I-20 and I-40, are their primary corridors. They also intersect with four north-south interstates and countless subordinate highways to provide an effective transportation network for DTOs.

Our area also borders the Gulf of Mexico and provides strategic maritime access to significant portions of the country. It contains six deep-water ports capable of servicing the largest of seagoing vessels. The major drug producing countries of Central and South America significantly impact the GC HIDTA because of their proximity and trade relationships. The vast waterways and coastlines provide unlimited opportunities for smuggling, thereby making our geographical location attractive to drug traffickers. Additionally, international airports located in strategic positions throughout the GC HIDTA, as well as rural and isolated airstrips provide advantageous surroundings for air smuggling opportunities.

In 2010, the GC HIDTA had 30 initiatives operating in the four-state area of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. The initiatives were aligned in the following manner:

- 21- Major Investigation/Interdiction
- 4- Violent Crime/Safe Streets
- 1- Fugitive Apprehension
- 1- Training
- 1- Management & Coordination
- 2- Intelligence/Coordination

Federal/State/Local Participation 2010 Total 537 Personnel





Performance Highlights 2010

- Over \$105 million in illicit drugs were confiscated from drug trafficking organizations.
- An additional \$29 million of drug-related assets were seized.
- Combined Return-on-Investment (ROI) of \$18.92 for every \$1 of GC HIDTA funds invested.
- GC HIDTA task forces identified 152 drug trafficking and money laundering organizations.
- During 2010, GC HIDTA dismantled 77 DTOs and disrupted another 151.
- Gulf Coast HIDTA initiatives destroyed 223 clandestine labs identified in 2010.
- Gulf Coast HIDTA initiatives were responsible for 5,244 arrests.
- Gulf Coast HIDTA initiatives seized 457 weapons and 276 vehicles.
- GC HIDTA initiatives developed more complex investigations on international and multi-state DTOs than any previous year.
- GC HIDTA entities initiated 22 OCDETF cases of which 15 were multi-state DTOs.
- Gulf Coast HIDTA/BLOC Watch Center reported \$16 million in currency seized on Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi highways.
- The Gulf Coast HIDTA Training Program provided drug enforcement-related training to 1,845 students.
- The Gulf Coast HIDTA Wire Intercept Center supported 93 wiretaps for its initiatives.
- Gulf Coast HIDTA initiatives entered 7,120 SAFETNet events/targets.
- Gulf Coast HIDTA initiatives seized 1,453 kilos of cocaine

Introduction

The primary function of the Gulf Coast HIDTA is to identify, disrupt and dismantle the major drug trafficking organizations operating in its area and beyond. In addition, significant effort is placed on the identification and seizure of drug-related assets accumulated by these organizations. The program also acts as a coordination mechanism for federal, state and local drug law enforcement resources arrayed in the region.

The program's success is measured through periodic evaluation of funded initiatives to ensure their focus and effectiveness is consistent with the Gulf Coast HIDTA and ONDCP's National Drug Control strategies. This is accomplished by regular site visits to initiative offices by Gulf Coast HIDTA management staff to determine programmatic and fiscal compliance of National HIDTA program guidelines. The Gulf Coast HIDTA Executive Board reviews all initiatives to determine their effectiveness at mitigating the drug threat.

GC HIDTA Initiative Locations

