



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HIDTA Agent Awarded for Excellence in Increasing Cooperation Among Law Enforcement Agencies**

**St. Thomas, USVI** – Nelson Rohena, a sergeant in the San Juan Municipal Police Department in Puerto Rico, has received the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program award for excellence for his outstanding work with the program’s efforts in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Ronald W. Sharpe, United States Attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands and Chairman of the Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands HIDTA, said Rohena’s achievements emphasize the importance of cooperation among law enforcement agencies at all levels. Sharpe has worked with Rohena on initiatives affecting the Virgin Islands, and saw first-hand how he was able to increase cooperation among law enforcement agencies by building relationships, sharing investigative techniques, conducting joint training, and through educational sharing.

“When we have this type of cooperation among law enforcement agencies on both the federal and local level, the shared information and manpower strengthen our efforts in battling crime in our communities,” Sharpe said.

Created by Congress in 1988, the HIDTA program provides assistance to federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug trafficking regions of the United States. Law enforcement organizations within HIDTA assess drug-trafficking problems and design specific initiatives to decrease the production, transportation, distribution and chronic use of drugs and money laundering.

There are currently 28 HIDTAs, which include approximately 16 percent of all counties in the United States and 60 percent of the U.S. population. HIDTA-designed counties are located in 46 states, as well as in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Washington, D.C.

The rate of current use of illicit drugs among Americans today is roughly one-third the rate in the late 1970s. More recently, the rate of current cocaine use has dropped by 50 percent, and the rate of

current methamphetamine use in America has been cut by one-third.

The Obama Administration requested more than \$10 billion for drug education and treatment, and more than \$9 billion for drug-related law enforcement efforts in the United States for fiscal year 2013.