



United States Attorney William J. Ihlenfeld, II
Northern District of West Virginia

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Drug task force formed to serve region

Federal indictments result from work of Mountain Region Drug Task Force

ELKINS, WEST VIRGINIA – Local, state and federal officials announced the formation of a new task force to serve the region in the investigation and prosecution of drug trafficking crimes.

United States Attorney William J. Ihlenfeld, II, was joined by other law enforcement leaders on Monday in Elkins and Parsons to officially announce the creation of the Mountain Region Drug & Violent Crime Task Force. The Task Force includes a total of nine agencies that have dedicated resources to the group. Ihlenfeld was accompanied by Sheriff Mark Brady and Prosecuting Attorney Michael Parker of Randolph County, Sheriff Brian Wilfong and Prosecuting Attorney Ray LaMora, III, of Tucker County, Prosecuting Attorney Eugene Simmons of Pocahontas County, and Lieutenant Mark Weaver of the West Virginia State Police. Clyde Thompson of the U.S. Forest Service and Suzan Williamson of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration also participated in the announcement.

According to Ihlenfeld, the unit began working together in 2013, and a memorandum of understanding was executed in the fall of last year. Due to sensitive investigations that have been ongoing the Task Force Board elected to wait until this January to announce the new group to the public.

“The members of the task force recognize that by combining intelligence gathering and investigative efforts the law enforcement assets of the participating agencies can be better utilized,” said Ihlenfeld. “It’s our intent to consolidate our drug enforcement efforts to enable a more effective effort in combating the drug trafficking organizations that operate in the region.”

Federal indictments were returned late last week as a result of the efforts of the Task Force. The indictments are only accusations and those charged are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. Among those indicted are the following individuals:

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- **Robert Franklin Davis, II**, 35, of Buckhannon, WV: Thirty-five counts related to meth manufacturing, including the Conspiracy to Manufacture Methamphetamine.
- **Brandon Michael Beeson**, 27, of Elkins, WV: Twenty counts related to meth manufacturing, including the Conspiracy to Manufacture Methamphetamine.
- **Jamie Nicole Chidester**, 25, of Buckhannon, WV: Sixteen counts related to meth manufacturing, including the Conspiracy to Manufacture Methamphetamine.
- **Chad Preston**, 34, of Elkins, WV: Distribution of Hydrocodone and Cocaine, and Possession with Intent to Distribute Oxycodone.
- **Keith Poteete**, 48, of Elkins, WV: Three counts of Distribution of Buprenorphine, and one count each of Distribution of Hydrocodone, Distribution of Cocaine, and Maintaining a Drug Involved Premises.
- **Jason Dwight Mackenzie**, 32, of Elkins, WV: One count of the Distribution of Buprenorphine.
- **Jonathan Healey**, 30, of Beverly, WV: Three counts of Distribution of Buprenorphine, one count of Aiding and Abetting the Distribution of Cocaine, and one count of Use of a Communication Device to Facilitate a Drug Felony.
- **John A. Boyles**, 30, of Kerens, WV: One count of Distribution of Crack Cocaine, and two counts of Possession with Intent to Distribute Crack Cocaine.
- **Arica M. Boyles**, 26, of Kerens, WV: One count of Distribution of Crack Cocaine, and two counts of Possession with Intent to Distribute Crack Cocaine.

“I am very pleased that the Randolph County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office is a founding member of this Task Force, as it has taken a significant amount of time and cooperation from the participating agencies to reach fruition,” said Prosecutor Parker. “The joint efforts and resources of all the member agencies will serve as a significant benefit for the citizens of Randolph County in combating the drug problem.”

“Tucker County’s involvement with the Mountain Region Drug Task Force has already been beneficial for the citizens of our county and our law enforcement,” said Prosecutor LaMora. “The cooperative efforts of our local law enforcement along with the multiple federal and state agencies have allowed access to resources and personnel that have never been open to us before.”

“Cooperation between our counties has allowed our law enforcement to follow the sale and distribution of narcotics between our counties and track individuals that intend to profit from these activities,” said Sheriff Wilfong.

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The efforts of the Task Force has also led to indictments being returned in August of 2013. Destry Seth Poling, Shannon David Flagg, Misty Autumn Grafton, Michael Luther White, Eric Scott Pennington, and Susan Chloe Ridley were all alleged to have been involved in the manufacture of methamphetamine in Tucker County. Each of these individuals have been convicted in federal court and are awaiting sentencing.

In addition, the Task Force investigation of John Morton, Jr. led to his conviction earlier this month for Second Degree Robbery in the Circuit Court of Tucker County. Morton stole prescription painkillers from the Rite Aid pharmacy in Parsons last year.

The Task Force has created a hotline so that members of the public can share information about drug activity in their community. The number is 304-636-TIPS (8477) and can be called twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. A website for the Task Force is nearly complete it will also accept tips from the public.

The Task Force will be supported on a case-by-case basis by the United States Postal Inspection Service, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Regular updates on the work of the Task Force will be made by press releases as well as via the official Twitter feed of the United States Attorney's Office, [@NDWVnews](#).

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