What is the “Lafourche Drug Task Force?"

Many news releases generated by the Lafourche Parish Sheriff’s Office unfortunately deal with drugs and their hold on members of our community:

*August 12, 2010 – “Sheriff Craig Webre announced members of the Lafourche Parish Drug Task Force in conjunction with the Thibodaux Police Department are in the process of circulating letters to store owners across the parish about popular products they may be selling that will become illegal this weekend. The letter details the provisions of Act 565 of the 2010 Legislative Session which bans the possession or distribution of synthetic cannabinoids. Some of the common brand names of these products include Mojo, K2, Spice and Voodoo.”

*July 15, 2010 – “Joint Effort Breaks Heroin Supply Line”

“Sheriff Craig Webre announced the arrest of three people in Lafourche Parish as part of a joint investigation into a heroin operation that stretched from Southeast Louisiana to Texas. The arrests were the result of joint investigation by Lafourche Drug Task Force Agents, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Louisiana State Police, and the Terrebonne Parish Drug Task Force. The individuals arrested Wednesday, July 14th are believed to be part of a heroin distribution operation that stretched from Houston, Texas to New Orleans. The investigation revealed at least one of the distribution sites was in the Lafourche/Terrebonne area.”

*Complete press releases can be found on our website, www.lpso.net

Off the streets of Lafourche Parish. The Task Force was first created back in mid-1980. The group works in hand with the Drug Enforcement Administration and other specialists in drug eradication. The agents and one Sergeant are assigned to the Narcotics Division of the Lafourche Parish Sheriff’s Office.

The operations they work are dangerous on a number of levels. Because of the nature of their activity, often people who deal in the sale of illegal narcotics are involved in other illegal and sometimes violent activity. The Task Force has found it is not unusual at all to find drugs, cash and guns in the same place. An investigation that begins on a small, local scale can also end up blossoming into a case that impacts several communities. Take one case into ecstasy distribution in our area. A case that started small ultimately lead agents to New Orleans East and the seizure of more than 60,000 doses of the drug.

In another case involving 30 kilos of cocaine, agents working with DEA ended up seizing $512,000 in cash. Luckily none of the members of the Task Force has been seriously hurt or killed in the performance of their duties. Currently, Task Force Agents are in the middle of an ongoing investigation into the infiltration of methamphetamine into our community. Thus far, the two year long investigation with DEA has stretched from Lafourche to Terrebonne Parishes and on to Houston, Texas and Modesto, California. It’s also resulted in the seizure of more than 20 pounds of pure methamphetamine and of approximately $1,100,000.00 in cash.

Part of the money seized that ultimately becomes the property of the Sheriff’s Office is funneled into the DARE program which tries to emphasize the dangers of drugs to our children. Seized assets also help fund our local drug court which attempts to help adults who are struggling with addiction. In the last five years alone, enforcement efforts have funneled nearly $33,000 to both programs. In that time, agents have investigated 1,725 cases and made 1,900 arrests.

Homemade Methamphetamine Seized in Raid.
The Newest Member of the LPSO Family

Our community was recently introduced to the newest member of the LPSO family when Reservist Guillermo Munive, wife Roberta and newborn daughter Fleur DeLis were subjects of an article in the Daily Comet (see link below). Little Fleur DeLis was born July 25th at Thibodaux Regional, weighing in at 8 pounds, 2 ounces and 20 inches long. Congratulations!


American Legion Post 349 Names Deputy of the Year

Sheriff Craig Webre is pleased to announce Sergeant Chantel Chouest was the recipient of American Legion Post 349’s Deputy of the Year award at recent ceremonies at their Raceland headquarters. The Post held ceremonies to install new officers and presented the award during that ceremony on Monday, July 19th.

The American Legion asks the Commander and Deputy Commander of the Patrol Division to nominate a candidate for the award. In choosing Sergeant Chouest, Captain Scott Silveri praised the officer for her dedication to the agency and willingness to go above and beyond to serve the citizens of Lafourche Parish. When Captain Silveri announced a new initiative targeting repeat DWI offenders, then-deputy Chouest stepped up to volunteer to spearhead the DWI STOP initiative. To eat that night and waved it under the donkey’s nose and suddenly he was willing to follow her anywhere. The scent of chocolate, pretzels and oats kept the animal distracted long enough for Grazier to rope him. Once she had him, she secured the other end of the rope to the inside of the unit’s trunk, figuring he’d have to really turn on the “horse power” to get away. But, the calls for service kept coming in, and the animal’s owner was nowhere to be found. With the cereal bar long gone, Grazier again soothed the not-so-savage beast with a little baby talk and the donkey allowed her to tie him up to a nearby sugar cane harvester. Three hours later, Grazier returned to find him still waiting for her and she and other deputies arranged to make sure he had water until the owner could be located. We are happy to report he has indeed been reunited with his owner and we have that information on file, should he decide to go out again at night on his own!

WANTED: Your old cell phone

The 911 Cell Phone Bank was created to provide an ongoing and readily available resource of 911 cell phones and funds to meet unexpected and urgent needs of participating law enforcement and affiliated victim service agencies. The Lafourche Parish Sheriff’s Office is a participating partner in the 911 Cell Phone Bank. Phones are collected, sent to the Cell Phone Bank then LPSO receives funds utilized by Police Social Services to help victims of crime. LPSO also receives free, refurbished cell phones from the cell phone bank to provide to victims or elderly citizens so that they can call 911 in an emergency for free.

If you or your organization would like to help by donating your old cell phones, please call Sgt. Lesley Hill at 985-532-4338. Your help is much needed and appreciated!
Sheriff Craig Webre announced the arrest of a Houma man for gambling with counterfeit money in at least two Lafourche Parish truck stop casinos. Carl Eschete (WM, DOB 9/2/1981, 225 Santa Monica Drive, Houma) was arrested Thursday evening following an investigation that began on July 4th.

On July 4th, employees with the Jester’s Walk Casino in Mathews (Hwy 308 & 654) reported finding counterfeit currency in the receipts from the night before. Two phony $100 bills and one fake $20 bill was found in the garbage can outside. Further investigation led detectives to Eschete who was taken into custody in Terrebonne Parish without incident, with the assistance of a Louisiana State Police Narcotics Agent.

The investigation is ongoing but is believed to be the continuation of an operation that authorities in Terrebonne first discovered in May when they arrested Eschete and Stephanie Giror (AKA Stephanie Bergeron). Detectives believe Eschete and Giror printed thousands of dollars worth of the “funny money” and it is unclear at this time just how much of it has been circulated in the local community.

“The pair went so far as to “mark” the bills to make it look as if they had already been checked by a bill checking pen,” said Sheriff Webre. “With the brown streak in place, cashiers often accepted the bills, no questions asked,” he added. Sheriff Webre offers the following tips to businesses in how to spot the counterfeit cash:

- Be sure to use your own bill checking pen to sort the bogus from the real bills.
- Be sure to check all money in well lit areas. The counterfeit looks very real in low light. But when you take a closer look, the real bills are much brighter in color. Also, the eagle found in the lower right hand side of the bill should have a glittery green appearance, not a dull gray appearance as found in the fake bills.

At this point, detectives believe the counterfeit money was also spent at Raceland Cash Magic casino. Anyone who believes they have some of the phony bills is asked to call Detective Barry Hebert at (985) 532-2255. You can also call Crimestoppers at 1-800-743-7433.
News from the Lafourche Deputies Association

The LDA Softball Tournament held at the Lockport ball fields August 6 – 8 was a huge success! This the Association’s largest fundraiser of the year and specifically helps fund the La fourche Pride Awards Banquet which is set for September 18, 2010 at the Nicholls Ballroom. 28 teams competed in the two and a half day long tournament.

The teams battled each other and the heat with the following coming out on top. In the end, LDA tripled its profit from 2009, bringing in $7,500. We also raised money for Deputy Johnnie Campbell and his wife Stephanie during a special half and half raffle held the last day.

Thank you to all of our teams, volunteers and sponsors and we look forward to seeing you again next year!

Bicycle Patrol Officers put through the paces

Bicycle Patrol Sgt. Todd Prevost was busy May 18 - 21 with a new bicycle certification class for several of our Officers along with Officers from outside agencies. Sgt. Prevost is an instructor for IPMBA (International Police Mountain Bike Association), which sets the standard for training by which agencies across the globe follow. The intense program includes classroom instruction in addition to thorough field training that test participants both mentally and physically.

Some bruises were spotted on a few legs and scrapes on a few elbows that earn students red stars for their helmets. Sgt. Prevost commented that this class had an unusually high amount of red stars distributed to a few participants. In the end, everyone satisfactorily completed all required events and much improvement was made in the skills that prepare Officers for nearly any obstacle they may encounter on Bicycle Patrol.

The now famous “night ride” drew plenty of attention from the public seeing 13 riders training through the streets. The effectiveness of Bicycle Patrol was demonstrated first hand to students with two drug arrest made during the ride that covered over 30 miles around Thibodaux.

Lafourche Deputies that completed the training are now qualified to participate in Patrol and parade activities. The Officers participating is this recent training were; Sergeant Chantel Chouest, Deputy Mandy Falcon, Deputy Gerard Loz, Deputy Jamie McKinney, and Deputy Blair Portier from Lafourche So, Sgt. Mark Wood and Officer Cameron Fairchild of Sulphur (La.) PD, and Det. Joey Gustofson with Officer Lance Percle with the Thibodaux PD.

The Rap Sheet, September 2010

LPSO Welcomes New Members of Bike Patrol – By Reservist Paul Lefort

First Place Men’s Team

Second Place Men’s Team

Third Place Men’s Team

First Place Women’s Team

Second Place Women’s Team

LPSO Welcomes New Members of Bike Patrol – By Reservist Paul Lefort

Bicycle Patrol Officers put through the paces

Bicycle Patrol Officers put through the paces

Bicycle Patrol Officers put through the paces