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National Drug Round-up Nets More than 4,900 arrests

The Week-long Initiative to Fight Drugs and Drug-Related Crime Calls Attention to the Importance of Federal Justice Assistance Funding

The National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies (NASDEA) today announces the arrests of 4,939 individuals on drug-related charges following a 7-day national operation that ended April 29. The operation, called *Operation Byrne Drugs II* was a coordinated effort led by NASDEA to focus on drug-related crimes and the importance of federally funded Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program in the day-to-day operations of drug enforcement.

This year's operation yielded¹ 4,939 arrests and the seizure of 2,480 kilograms of cocaine, 19.2 kilograms of heroin, 12.7 kilograms of methamphetamine, 8,732 pounds of processed marijuana (not including plants) and a variety of other drugs. Also seized were 88 Meth labs, 608 firearms and \$8.8 million cash. In addition, 177 children were determined to be endangered by the drug dealing or their use where they lived and those cases were referred to the appropriate child protection agency.

State police and highway patrol agencies, local police and sheriff's departments, and drug task forces throughout the nation collectively conducted undercover investigations, search warrants, consent searches, marijuana eradication efforts, drug interdiction and arrest warrants for the one-week period of April 23-29.

"This is a snapshot of what the national's drug enforcement officers face everyday," said NASDEA President Roy E. McKinney, Director of the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency. "Drugs ruin people's lives and bring crime and violence into our communities. Unfortunately,

¹ With 37 states reports received as of May 2

many more illegal drugs go undetected in our communities, not because of a lack of effort, but because of fewer resources for drug task force operations.”

The Byrne JAG program, named after Edward Byrne, a New York narcotics officer killed in the line of duty, is a critical element of a balanced and integrated Federal strategy aimed at reducing drug use. One of the most important uses of the Byrne-JAG program is funding multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, which help law enforcement systematically reduce the impact on our communities from drug-related violent crime, gangs, and organized crime. Since FY 2002, funding for justice assistance programs in the Department of Justice has fallen dramatically. Coinciding with the recent decrease in federal drug and crime control funding, the FBI reports an increase in violent crime across America over the last two years.

This funding is critical to continue effective programs that are essential in the fight against drug and gang related crime in addition to programs that assist in the prevention of drug use, treat non-violent offenders, and improve the effectiveness of prosecution, courts, and corrections practices. The Byrne Justice Assistance Grant formula program allows states, counties, and municipalities to allocate funds each year to state and local programs that address pressing problems in their areas.

The President’s budget request in each of the past two years has included no funding for Byrne JAG. Despite the lack of administration support, Congress has continued to recognize the effectiveness and necessity the program by providing funding for the program each year. For FY 2007, Byrne-JAG was funded at \$520 million, but the Administration is requesting only \$350 million for FY 2008 for a combination of Byrne-JAG formula and discretionary accounts plus most State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance categorical grant programs. The Administration’s request is an insufficient response to drug-driven violent crime and the increasing challenge from transnational gangs.

“As a national organization, NASDEA is opposed to the Administration’s FY 2008 budget proposal for the Byrne JAG program, and instead strongly supports funding at the authorized level of \$1.1 billion. We look forward to working with our partners and Congress to find the necessary funds for this program at its authorized level,” McKinney said.

NASDEA was formed in 1975 to provide a forum for state drug enforcement executives to exchange information, concepts, techniques and management objectives unique to their area of law enforcement. NASDEA also serves as a collective voice for state level drug enforcement in providing input for the development of national drug strategies and programs.

For more information, please contact your state representative listed on the NASDEA Web site, www.nasdea.org

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