

FBI Press Release

Atlanta Field Office

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For Immediate Release Thursday, December 16, 2010

ATLANTA—Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Brian D. Lamkin, in conjunction with Beverly Harvard, U.S Marshal, Northern District of Georgia, are pleased to announce, on behalf of the David G. Wilhelm Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Strike Force, the following information:

The David G. Wilhelm OCDETF Strike Force is well into its fourth year, having been established on March 29, 2007. The concept of the Strike Force was initiated by the various special agents in charge of the federal law enforcement agencies here in Atlanta, along with the United States Attorney, who participate in the (OCDETF). It was recognized that a special collaborative effort was necessary to better combat the drug distribution and collection of drug proceeds throughout the metro Atlanta area as it was further recognized that the Atlanta area had established itself as a hub for this activity.

The Wilhelm Strike Force brings together the assets and strengths of the various federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies into a co-located task force. This serves as a force multiplier in investigating and prosecuting high level members of the international drug cartels that have operations in metro Atlanta and throughout the United States. As part of its effort to dismantle these criminal organizations, forfeiture of profits and seizure of assets from these organizations is paramount.

Today we reaffirm our partnership with the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department, the Georgia Department of Public Safety, the Fayette County Sheriff's Department, and the Lawrenceville Police Department in the joint endeavors of the Wilhelm Strike Force and their commitment in making the community a safer place for all.

The Strike Force is pleased to present to our partners checks totaling \$1,609,000.00. These monies are derived from assets forfeited and/or seized in Operation Grand Finale, an 18-month-long investigation wherein the many varied law enforcement agencies worked together to disrupt a major cell of a Mexican cartel, a notoriously violent drug trafficking organization, and took a major step towards eradicating a significant threat to our economic and national security. During this investigation, agents and officers have seized approximately 581 kilograms of cocaine, approximately 219 pounds of methamphetamines, and approximately \$3.5 million in currency. To date, federal charges have been filed against 16 defendants in several states. This investigation determined that the targeted organization regularly transported large quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana from Mexico to Atlanta, and then transported currency accumulated from the sale of the illegal drugs back from Atlanta to McAllen, Texas, and then on to the organization's leaders in Mexico.

Today's presentations are not only an example of what can be accomplished by a metro Atlanta law enforcement community working together, but also an opportunity to recognize that partnership that is so needed and appreciated.

Administrative Matter:

Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office \$402,000

Georgia Dept. of Public Safety \$503,000

Fayette County Sheriff's Office \$101,000

Lawrenceville Police Department \$603,000

Grand Total \$1,609,000.00

Fayette County Photo -

Pictured I-r: FBI Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Brian D. Lamkin, U.S. Marshal Beverly Harvard, Fayette County Sheriff Wayne Hannah.

