

Sheriff



Larry Ashley, Okaloosa County Sheriff

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OCSO STREET CRIMES UNIT TARGETS COUNTY DRUG DEALERS

A four-month long investigation led by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Street Crimes Unit, with the assistance of the Fort Walton Beach Police Department, has led to the arrest so far of twenty-two suspected street drug dealers across South Okaloosa County.

The undercover operation dubbed "Operation Safe Streets" came in response to citizen's complaints regarding drug dealers operating in the Sylvania Heights area but the scale of the investigation grew to include other areas within South Okaloosa County as well as in the city limits of Fort Walton Beach.

"We want the public to realize taking their tips and initiating an operation to establish enough probable cause to make an arrest that will stand up in court takes time but those tips pay off and operations like this one are proof of that", said Special Operations Commander Capt. Tony Wasden. "We encourage the public to keep those tips coming because the problem is not just concentrated in one or two areas and we want drug dealers countywide to constantly have to look over their shoulders. We won't let up on our efforts to put them and upper level suppliers in jail. More arrests are coming."

A round-up of the suspects began around noon on Tuesday December 28th and within the first six hours, eighteen arrests had been made. The operation continued into Wednesday and is ongoing.

Sheriff Larry Ashley said, "The men and women of the OCSO Street Crimes Unit work all hours of the day and night, undercover and often in potentially dangerous situations, and that work is clearly helping to make our community safer."

Arrested for possession and sale of cocaine to date are: Lederle Walker, Dianna Shepard, Cadale Carson, Connie Jones, Anthony Allen, Gary Banks, Andre Hardaway, Jeffery Fearson, Sashim Hampton, Juan Morales, Rene Mena, Thomas Cottrell, Demetrius Cobb, Tiffany Streeter, Amin Simmons, Vernoica Hough, Curtis King and Shirley Braziel. (arrest reports forthcoming in separate attachment)

Other associated arrests include: Jeremy Knox, violation of probation for sale of cocaine; Wendy Bobbin, possession of drug paraphernalia, Samuel Temple, possession of drug paraphernalia, and Gabi Simmons, possession of cocaine.

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