



City of Casa Grande Police Department

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April 8, 2015
5:00 p.m.

For Immediate Release

CGPD Leads Major "Spice" Bust

Casa Grande, AZ – In 2012, the Casa Grande Police Department, along with the Pinal County Attorney's Office (PCAO) and the Casa Grande Alliance, led a community based initiative to educate local businesses, specifically convenience stores, about the dangers of the drug "spice". Several businesses were carrying and selling various labels of spice at that time. The majority of these businesses stopped selling the drug upon learning the dangers of spice use.

"Spice" refers to a wide variety of herbal mixtures that produce experiences similar to marijuana (cannabis) and that are marketed as "safe," legal alternatives to that drug. Sold under many names, including Headrush, K2, fake weed, Yucatan Fire, Skunk, Moon Rocks, and others — and labeled "not for human consumption" — these products contain dried, shredded plant material and chemical additives that are responsible for their psychoactive (mind-altering) effects.

The CGPD Narcotics Unit routinely visits and investigates businesses in our community in an effort to identify any type of criminal drug activity. During the past two years, Detectives were made aware of and gathered evidence of spice being sold at a local business, the Convenience Depot, located at 623 East Cottonwood Lane.

Based on the information gathered during this investigation, Detectives were able to serve a search warrant at Convenience Depot in February of 2015. This search warrant produced significant evidence leading to the arrest of the business owner and a search of his Casa Grande residence. Detectives seized more than 2,000 packages of spice, transaction records and property purchased with profits made from spice sales.



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Continued

Our Narcotics Unit and the PCAO Organized Crimes Bureau then continued the investigation in an effort to identify the distributor to Convenience Depot. Detectives were able to locate and arrest the distributor in Scottsdale and subsequently served a search warrant at his residence. This resulted in a partnership with the Phoenix Field Division of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Based off of CGPD's investigation, the DEA was able to locate the manufacturing facility and ultimately arrested three subjects involved in the distribution and manufacturing of spice.

On April 6th, 2015, the Phoenix Field Division of the DEA issued a Media Release specifically addressing this most recent operation. (attached)

“We want our citizens to know that we recognize the serious impact spice has had on the youth of Casa Grande and are committed to the eradication of all dangerous drugs in our community.” said CGPD Director of Police Services Chris Vasquez, “We are proud of our partnership with the Casa Grande Alliance and the Pinal County Attorney's Office. Furthermore, we want to thank the DEA for their partnership in completing this investigation.

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