



# Department of Justice

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## **INDICTMENTS CHARGING 14 WITH DRUG TRAFFICKING IN ROSS COUNTY ANNOUNCED**

CHILLICOTHE -- Teams of federal, state and local law enforcement agents today began arresting 10 people accused in four federal indictments charging them with trafficking cocaine, crack cocaine, and/or marijuana in central and southern Ohio. Law enforcement officials also announced two other indictments charging four additional Ross County residents with trafficking marijuana. A list of defendants and the charges they face is attached.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI), Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation Cincinnati Field Division (FBI), and Ross County Sheriff George W. Lavender, Jr., announced the arrests today. A federal grand jury in Columbus returned four of the indictments on February 12. They were unsealed following the arrests.

The charges are the result of a four-year investigation by the FBI, BCI, Ross County Sheriff's Office and other state and local law enforcement agencies.

"The 14 people named in these six indictments face lengthy terms in federal prison if convicted," Lockhart said. "These charges are not just about a few transactions, but about a historical pattern of drug trafficking."

The indictments unsealed today allege that the defendants possessed and distributed quantities of crack cocaine, marijuana and cocaine, maintained properties used to manage and control the illegal distribution of drugs, and illegally possessed firearms in connection with the drug sales.

On November 6, 2008, a federal grand jury in Columbus returned an eight-count indictment charging Lester Hatfield and William D. Hatfield with conspiracy to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, money laundering, and marijuana trafficking. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of 78 firearms seized during execution of search warrants. Both are scheduled for trial on April 13, 2009 in Columbus.

In a related case, the grand jury charged Jackie L. Daugherty and James H. Daugherty with conspiracy in a five-count indictment. James H. Daugherty pleaded guilty to conspiracy on February 12, 2009. Trial for Jackie L. Daugherty is scheduled for May 18, 2009 on charges of distributing more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, and marijuana trafficking.

Lockhart commended the cooperative investigation by Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, and FBI agents and Ross County Sheriff's deputies, along with Assistant U.S. Attorneys Robyn Hahnert and Kevin W. Kelley, who are prosecuting the case. Lockhart said the investigation is continuing.

Other agencies participating in the task force include the Chillicothe Police Department, the sheriff's offices in Highland, Fayette and Jackson counties, the Waverly, Jackson and Circleville police departments, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

An indictment is merely an accusation. All defendants should be presumed innocent until and unless the government proves their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in court.

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