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Ralph Obenberger
Sheriff/Coroner

MONO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
PRESS RELEASE

Robert Weber
Undersheriff

To: All News Outlets

From: Jennifer Hansen, Public Information Officer

Date: December 20, 2013

RE: Traffic stop leads to narcotics arrest

The Mono County Narcotics Enforcement Team (MONET), along with the assistance of the Mono County Sheriff's Office, Mammoth Lakes Police Department, and Inyo County Narcotics Enforcement Team (INET), concluded a narcotics arrest in the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, December 18, 2013, at approximately 1:30pm, Mammoth Lakes Police Officers, with the assistance of Mono County Sheriff's Deputies, conducted a traffic stop on a black pickup truck for several vehicle code violations. During the traffic stop, both occupants of the vehicle exhibited signs of being under the influence. MONET agents, and K9 "Tara", were requested for a search of the vehicle. K9 "Tara" alerted agents to the vehicles driver seat. Agents, deputies, and officers conducted a physical search of the vehicle and located a glass pipe with methamphetamine inside. When the driver, Gregorio Tinoco Hernandez, age 24, of Mammoth Lakes, and passenger, Antonio Garcia Serrano, age 36, also of Mammoth Lakes, were questioned about the glass pipe, both admitted to smoking methamphetamine. Mr. Hernandez also told MONET agents that he was currently on his way to purchase methamphetamine from another person. Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Serrano were placed under arrest without incident.

With the intended narcotic purchase information, MONET and INET agents setup the buy. Mr. Rene Lugo Cortez, age 22, of Bishop, CA, was parked in an upper parking lot when he recognized the vehicle, driven by undercover agents, that he was to sell methamphetamine too. Mr. Cortez exited his vehicle and instructed the passengers to then drive away. Passenger, Kenneth Chandler, age 21, of Bishop, CA, changed seats and drove Cortez's vehicle away. Mr. Cortez met with the undercover agents, knew they were not the intended buyers, tried to run from the authorities, and was placed under arrest without further incident.

MONET agents, deputies, and officers located Mr. Cortez's vehicle and conducted a traffic stop. K9 Tara conducted a search of the vehicle and alerted agents to the presence of narcotics in the vehicle. After the alert, a glass pipe, an ounce of methamphetamine, and a digital scale were located inside the vehicle. Mr. Chandler and passenger, Felis Landa, age 26, of Bishop, CA, were placed under arrest without incident. When Mr. Cortez, Mr. Chandler, and Mr. Landa were questioned, they admitted to smoking methamphetamine and that they have traveled from Bishop to Mammoth Lakes with the intention of selling methamphetamine to Mr. Hernandez. All five individuals were transported and booked into the Mono County Jail in Bridgeport.

Gregorio Tinoco Hernandez, age 24, of Mammoth Lakes, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance; possession of controlled substance paraphernalia; and being under the influence of a controlled substance.

Antonio Garcia Serrano, age 36, of Mammoth Lakes, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance; possession of controlled substance paraphernalia; and being under the influence of a controlled substance.

Rene Lugo Cortez, age 22, of Bishop, was ultimately arrested for transportation of a controlled substance; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a controlled substance for sales; possession of controlled substance paraphernalia; being under the influence of a controlled substance; and conspiracy to commit a crime. Mr. Cortez is currently in custody in the Mono County Jail.

Felis Landa, age 26, of Bishop, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance for sales; possession of a controlled substance; being under the influence of a controlled substance; and conspiracy to commit a crime. Mr. Landa is currently in custody in the Mono County Jail.

Kenneth Chandler, age 21, of Bishop, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance for sale; possession of a controlled substance; being under the influence of a controlled substance; and conspiracy to commit a crime. Mr. Chandler is currently in custody in the Mono County Jail.

All charges for the five individuals are pending through the Mono County District Attorney's Office.

Written and reported by: Jennifer M. Hansen, Public Information Officer

The law requires that arrest information be made available to the public. This publication may contain suspect information about individuals booked by the Mono County Sheriff's Department recently. Names of juveniles (under 18 years of age) are not public. Suspect information and ongoing investigation details are also withheld. Since most cases have yet to be adjudicated, all charges should be considered allegations. For questions/concerns regarding any information contained in this publication, contact Undersheriff Robert Weber at (760) 932-7549.