

Greenville County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit



Annual Report

FY 2019

This report captures the performance metrics from August 2019 – June 30, 2020 to include DEU highlights and emerging threats involving the illegal usage and trafficking of narcotics.

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Background and Formation

Inaugurated in August 2019, the Greenville County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) is the strategic vision of the law enforcement executive leadership of Greenville County. The unit is a compilation of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office, and the local police departments from the Greenville, Greer, Fountain Inn, Simpsonville, Mauldin, and Traveler's Rest Police. The primary focus is to investigate narcotics crimes, with an emphasis on dismantling mid to major level drug trafficking organizations. The DEU is governed by a board of directors comprised of the law enforcement executive head from each member agency. The board helps direct the goals and objectives of the task force while ensuring the unit has well-managed resources.



The DEU operates from a consolidated work space centrally located in Greenville County. Personnel deployment currently consists of a Commander, Assistant Commander, two Sergeants, and 20 narcotics investigators. The Commander and Assistant Commander provide strategic leadership both for long term impact as well as to the daily impact of the unit's efforts in combating drug trafficking. The Commander works closely with all unit members and a myriad of other local, state and federal agencies across the U.S. The two sergeants oversee their assigned regions and manage the enforcement teams assigned to their region.

The DEU's primary area of expertise is narcotic and vice enforcement. The DEU is known for its surveillance capabilities and possesses some of the most extensive surveillance resources in Greenville County. The enforcement teams have specialized proficiency in the following areas: major drug trafficking organizations, money laundering, covert operations/informant development, clandestine laboratory investigations, parcel interdiction and organized criminal group enforcement. The DEU serves as the primary clandestine laboratory response team for Greenville County.

The DEU continues to prioritize its resources to disrupt and dismantle the drug trafficking and money laundering organizations believed to be primarily responsible for the illicit drug supply within Greenville county. The DEU has placed emphasis on

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Mexican drug trafficking organizations as well as pill press operations in Greenville County. Organized distribution groups have forged alliances with the Mexican drug trafficking organizations resulting in an increased amount of methamphetamine and opioid related drugs being moved into Greenville County. Localized street gangs and homegrown criminal groups/individuals also serve as distribution outlets for narcotics with many of these individuals known to travel out of state to get their needed supply of drugs.

Mission

DEU's overall mission is to enforce the drug and vice laws of South Carolina in the geographical area of Greenville County by bringing drug traffickers and criminal violators to justice. DEU is the **lead local unit** responsible for enforcing and investigating narcotics and vice related crimes in Greenville County and operates by (1) coordinating and pursuing drug investigations; (2) investigating major drug traffickers operating at local, state, and federal levels; (3) supporting agencies in investigating and gathering intelligence on criminals and drug gangs who distribute narcotics and perpetrate violence in local communities; and (5) coordinating and cooperating with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies on mutual drug enforcement efforts and de-confliction of information.

Enforcement Strategy

DEU executes a two-prong approach in the fight to stem the flow of drugs to our communities. Investigators pursue investigations that not only target the drug distribution rings in the county but also the suppliers outside of the boundary. DEU investigates all levels of drug activity but the focus and strategy is to identify and disrupt the mid to high level drug distribution chains in the county. Such efforts increase the capacity to detect, disrupt, seize, and investigate shipments of illicit drugs making their way into communities. Drug organizations continue to modify their techniques and operations in an attempt to mitigate the chance of being caught and to maximize potential profits by being able to distribute larger quantities of narcotics. In combating the drug scourge, DEU must respond to the emerging trends and uncover vulnerabilities in the dealer's distribution chain to disrupt the activities

Funding

In this reporting year, DEU received no direct funding from any participating government body. The initial startup of DEU was funded through each participating agencies' agreement to provide a level of funding. The basis of all startup funding for DEU was through the asset forfeiture funds available to each agency. DEU requires funding to operate investigations by making purchases of illicit narcotics, paying investigative costs where information is supplied by a third party (examples: telephone companies, credit reports, towing costs, vehicle tracking), paying sources of information for corroborated information, and many other areas. Each participating agency provides funds to support the assigned officer's daily routines and a vehicle. The participating agency typically funds fuel, equipment, travel and similar expenses to pursue investigative leads or for their officer(s) to attend needed training courses.

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DEU Initial Funding Contributions for Investigations	
Greenville County Sheriff's Office	\$50,000
Greenville Police Department	\$25,000
Greer Police Department	\$10,000
Mauldin Police Department	\$8,000
Simpsonville Police Department	\$5,000
Fountain Inn Police Department	\$2,000
Travelers Rest Police	\$2,000
Total	\$102,000

How is Funding Expended?

DEU investigators respond to the needs of all participating agency narcotic investigative requests for support and do not discriminate regarding jurisdictional boundaries. While the DEU management does make efforts to have an officer from its jurisdiction assigned as a primary investigator regarding a drug crime, every participating agency benefits by having a cadre of trained investigators at the communities disposal. Investigators follow leads anywhere in the county and provide support to participating agencies. The task force concept allows the DEU to act as a force multiplier and enhances drug trafficking suppression efforts in our communities.

Drug investigations rely heavily on information received from individuals who come from many spectrums – informants, citizens, and cooperating defendants. Once reliable information is developed to initiate a drug investigation, the investigation can take many avenues. Surveillance operations, undercover purchases, intelligence gathering, and utilizing electronic methods to covertly identify the routes of distribution, individuals involved, and patterns of criminal activity. No matter the method of the investigation, each comes with a cost.

Drug dealers sell drugs because of the tremendous profits to be made. Illicit drugs are not cheap even at the wholesale level of drug distribution. Profits from sales of illicit drugs allow drug organizations to invest and continue their operations. To investigate and dismantle these illicit trafficking groups requires the same investment at a law enforcement level. To infiltrate and gather evidence of a drug trafficking crime requires the DEU to expend funds to purchase illicit drugs. Funding for drug purchases can range from \$100 a gram for cocaine to as much as \$35,000 for a kilo of heroin. To gain access to the highest levels of narcotic traffickers requires this type of a significant investment and funding support.

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Future Funding of DEU

As reported, the initial startup of the DEU was funded through each participating agencies' agreement to provide a level of funding. Future funding for the DEU will occur mostly through the use of asset forfeiture funds. Without asset forfeiture funding, it is highly likely the DEU may potentially be eliminated. If this were to occur, the success now being made would end and the Greenville County communities would likely be greatly impacted by the criminal activity that would result. DEU takes forfeitures seriously and maintains a strict policy when seizing assets:

1. DEU transmits all information on seizures to the Solicitor's Office within five days in order for a review to occur.
2. DEU does not seize funds in amounts less than \$1,000.00
3. DEU requires all investigators who seize an asset to complete a Probable Cause Statement outlining the seizure and justification of the seizure. All Probable Cause Statements are reviewed by a command-level supervisor as well as a representative from the Solicitor's Office.
4. DEU has a written policy governing the area of asset seizures.

The vast majority of funds seized by the DEU during this reporting period are illustrated in this report in various sections.

Drug Statistics and Enforcement Efforts

Arrests

Beginning in October 2019, DEU has implemented a three-tiered classification system to assist in measuring the unit's performance. The system enables arrestees to be properly classified for purposes of impact to our communities. The three arrest classifications are:

<u>Tier I</u>	Any individual charged with trafficking offense under the SC Code of Laws or federal charges
<u>Tier II</u>	Any individual charged with a PWID or related prescription fraud offense under SC Code of Law
Tier III	All other narcotic related charges

Arrests outside of narcotic related arrests are carried in a miscellaneous category. While arrests by DEU personnel may fall into the miscellaneous category, these arrests should not be dismissed as simply non-impactful. All arrests have some influence on drug or criminal activity and make our communities safer in Greenville County. The purpose of the tier classification system serves as a measurement tool for performance related to the approved DEU goals and strategies.

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Total Arrests by Tier	
<u>Tier I</u>	61
<u>Tier II</u>	38
<u>Tier III</u>	18
Miscellaneous	2
September 2019* prior to tier system	16
Total	135

GCMDEU Narcotic Seizures												
Narcotic	Measurement	Sep-19	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	YTD Total
Meth	grams	4,771.79	547.50	3,365.66	1,038.72	116.80	1,496.85	264.15	1,474.17	640.90	1.07	13,717.61
	pounds	10.52	1.21	7.42	2.29	0.26	3.30	0.58	3.25	1.41	0.002	30.24lbs
Heroin	grams	1,036.60	38.40	7.80	12.00	555.10	135.04	572.98	1,899.60	15.60	15.00	4,288.12
	pounds	2.29	0.08	0.02	0.03	1.22	0.30	1.26	4.19	0.03	0.03	9.45
Fentanyl	grams	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.10	142.70	11.40	148.00	483.80	787.00
	pounds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.03	0.33	1.07	1.74
Heroin/Fentanyl	grams	0.00	79.00	21.00	28.11	47.50	0.00	497.00	0.02	71.70	15.60	759.93
	pounds	0.00	0.17	0.05	0.06	0.10	0.00	1.10	0.00	0.16	0.03	1.68
Cocaine	grams	3.10	41.20	7.50	1,000.00	4,320.00	8.50	1,870.00	7.60	97.40	13.80	7,369.00
	pounds	0.01	0.09	0.02	2.20	9.52	0.02	4.12	0.02	0.21	0.03	16.25
Marijuana	grams	6,803.88	378.80	8,255.38	153.70	71,000.81	16.30	4,799.00	6,631.52	491.50	19,345.71	117,876.60
	pounds	15.00	0.84	18.20	0.34	156.53	0.04	10.58	14.62	1.08	42.65	259.87
THC Cartridges	grams	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	pounds	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	quantity	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	35.00	1.00	816.00	852.00
THC Edibles/Wax	grams	0.00	34,182.72	0.00	0.00	1,333.56	42.90	0.00	0.00	148.00	38,042.79	73,749.97
	pounds	0	75.36	0	0	2.94	0.095	0	0	0.326	83.87	162.591

One of the greatest challenges of assessing the impact of effective drug enforcement practices is identifying measureable outcomes. The DEU has seized more than 450 pounds (204,116 grams) of narcotics in the first ten months of the unit's performance. The removal of these illegal products has undoubtedly benefited the community and will continue to do so. At a minimum, DEU efforts prevented 135,000 separate times that a drug user was not able to ingest meth, opiate type narcotics, or cocaine.

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DEU Assigned Canines

The DEU has two assigned K-9's and handlers provided by the Greenville and Mauldin Police Departments. Both K-9/s are certified by the North American Working Dog's Association and are regularly called upon to assist DEU in carrying out missions. Ambrose is a seven year old multi-purpose canine and has been instrumental in the seizure of 44 pounds of marijuana, 1.8 pounds of methamphetamine, 1.6 pounds of heroin, and 4.6 pounds of cocaine. Scooter is a five year old Labrador retriever and has been deployed on 30



incidents and has assisted in the recovery of multiple pounds of marijuana, methamphetamine, heroin, and fentanyl. The two canines work hand-to-nose with their handlers/investigators assigned to the SPEAR team.

Drug Trends and Enforcement

Marijuana

Marijuana and marijuana derivatives are readily encountered by law enforcement throughout Greenville County. Marijuana reaches Greenville by many methods and routes. The “decriminalization” of marijuana in the western portions of the U.S. has opened pipelines of distribution to Greenville. Many of the western U.S. states that decriminalized marijuana have an overabundance and excess of marijuana. Some growers and distributors, along with individuals, take advantage of the vulnerabilities in the control mechanisms of the source states and eagerly sell the excess into the black markets. It is not uncommon for law enforcement agencies in the Greenville area to encounter THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) derivatives seized revealing markings indicating that they were originally sourced from both legal and illegal dispensaries in western states (e.g. California, Washington and Colorado).

Much of the marijuana encountered is unknowingly transported by commercial mail carriers and overnight delivery services. Traffickers source marijuana and marijuana derivatives from states that have legalized or decriminalized marijuana use and sale, such as Colorado and California. Marijuana, in hundred pound lots, is also obtained from the Mexican drug traffickers and other organized distributors who arrange for the smuggling of marijuana into Greenville County. Further, local grow operations are encountered by law enforcement in the area. Marijuana prices have not changed drastically from years past with high-grade marijuana averaging \$2,000 - \$5,000 per pound, \$250 - \$700 per ounce and Mexican grade marijuana selling for \$1,000 - \$2,800 per pound.



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THC edibles are food products that have been infused with marijuana. The influx of THC-products available to consumers is an alarming reality of the legalization of marijuana occurring in the western parts of the United States. THC edibles are food products that have been infused with marijuana. These products come in a variety of different forms and are sold into the consumer market under various names. Edibles infused with cannabis extract have become a popular way to sell marijuana in western states. THC edibles are easily concealed and the movement of the product is fairly easy. The amount of THC contained within the products is difficult to measure and is often unknown.

- DEU investigators responded to an apartment complex in the Piedmont area of Greenville County regarding the delivery of two large Home Depot boxes. Upon arrival, investigators encountered a male individual attempting to exit the apartment office carrying one of the parcels. The individual was detained and claimed he was only a “mule” being paid \$1,000 per box to pick up the parcels. Information developed during the investigation determined the parcel was destined for the Travelers Rest area. The two parcels were found to contain 75 pounds of various pre-packaged products of marijuana - to include edibles, plant material, rolled joints, and other cannabis derived products.



Which is THC laced?

The importation of THC candy products were discovered during a DEU/State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) SPEAR interception of parcels. The parcels contained 3.5 pounds of THC “nerd ropes” and 3.0 pounds of THC “Trolli” gummies.

Many of the products sold into the market are packaged similar to children’s candy products. It is common for law enforcement agencies to discover THC- infused gummies, cookies, and other products throughout Greenville County.



June 2020 S.P.E.A.R. Seizure

In addition to THC edibles, THC vape cartridges and THC laced cigars are also common. The illegal marijuana vape market is estimated to reach \$2.5 billion and the

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products are consistently discovered throughout Greenville County. The illegal distribution of THC vape cartridges and cigars is operated by individuals who accept orders through social media applications and regularly have THC vape cartridges shipped into the county. Once removed from its packaging, THC vape cartridges can be difficult for drug investigators to differentiate from legal tobacco related vape cartridges.

Marijuana Enforcement Highlights

- In August 2019, DEU investigators, operating in an undercover capacity, met with an individual in Greenville to discuss the subject offering to sell high intensity lights known to be used in marijuana cultivation. As the investigation progressed, investigators learned the subject was growing marijuana inside of his residence. A search warrant was obtained for a marijuana grow operation and additional equipment used to grow marijuana was found in an upstairs bedroom.
- In September 2019, DEU investigators intercepted a parcel addressed to an individual in Mauldin. Investigators determined the parcel contained approximately 23 pounds of marijuana. The recipients of the parcel became aware of the seizure and additional efforts to deliver the parcel were thwarted.
- In January 2020, members of the DEU served a search warrant at a residence in Simpsonville. Upon entering the residence, a hydroponic marijuana grow was found operating in the residence along with numerous firearms, THC edibles (which appear to be homemade) and over \$4,000 cash. During the search warrant, information was developed that a potential second marijuana grow location was operating in a residence in Salem, VA. DEU investigators made contact with the Roanoke County Police Department Narcotics Task Force and provided information on the location of this grow operation. Roanoke PD served a search warrant at this location and recovered 139 marijuana plants in varying stages of growth, several pounds of matured marijuana, and numerous marijuana THC edibles. Evidence of recently harvested marijuana was observed by the officers. The investigation uncovered that the main target of the case was transporting large amounts of marijuana from Virginia to Greenville, SC. Further, the target was creating



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homemade edibles for sale in Virginia and South Carolina.

- In September 2019, DEU investigators responded to the Greenville Memorial Hospital concerning a victim who had been left at the hospital. After dropping the victim off, the brother of the victim was stopped while exiting the parking lot. Investigators found three pounds of marijuana and \$4,935 in U.S. currency. Investigators learned the victim had been shot in a marijuana transaction that had gone wrong.
- In March 2020, the Fountain Inn Police Department noticed increased traffic coming and going from a residence. DEU investigators were notified and conducted an investigation and uncovered parcels being shipped from California to the address. A search warrant was obtained and served on the location resulting in the seizure of marijuana.
- DEU investigators identified a storage unit off of Woodruff Road in Greenville suspected of storing marijuana. The DEU conducted a K9 sniff of the unit and alerted to the presence of marijuana. A search warrant was secured resulting in the seizure of 3.5 pounds of marijuana.
- DEU initiated an investigation regarding a marijuana trafficking group located in the western section of Greenville County. The investigation determined the organization has been distributing marijuana throughout Greenville County and Greenville city for many months. Additionally, it is believed the organization was operating a marijuana distribution business utilizing web based services to



distribute marijuana elsewhere. DEU, assisted by the GCSO Uniform Patrol Division, served multiple search warrants. At one location, the DEU found \$21,000 cash wrapped in bundles. At the second location, DEU found an additional \$43,592 in cash, approximately 12 pounds of marijuana, and evidence to support trafficking. Total cash seized is \$64,592.

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OPIATES

Greenville County, like many other counties and municipalities across the United States, is in the midst of the deadliest opioid epidemic in American history. Large amounts of high-quality/low cost heroin and illicit fentanyl are contributing to record numbers of overdose deaths and life-threatening addictions in Greenville County. The heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine are contributing significantly to the unprecedented rise in deaths from drug overdoses throughout the United States. The availability of fentanyl in Greenville County has increased significantly in recent years. However, in one pill press operation, the mixtures and chemicals present indicated the illicit operators may have been attempting to manufacture fentanyl. Fentanyl is most commonly encountered in powder form, often in combination with heroin. Fentanyl also is encountered in counterfeit pressed pharmaceutical pills. After receiving powdered fentanyl or heroin, the DEU is aware many of the local distributors purchase and utilize pill presses to press the powder into tablet (pill) forms. While many users actively seek out fentanyl for a high, many others are unknowingly subjected to its powerful and deadly effects. The threat of Fentanyl overdoses continues to grow and evolve.

Heroin/Fentanyl prices average \$35,000 to \$50,000 per kilogram. Street dealer prices range from \$75 to \$100 per gram. DEU expects heroin distribution and use to continue to plague the Greenville area and continues to prioritize its resources into identifying and disrupting dealers of fentanyl and heroin.

Opiate Enforcement Highlights

- In October 2019, DEU investigators executed a search warrant for a location in west Greenville city. The target of the search warrant has been identified as a ranking member of the Insane Vice Lords street gang. The gang member had previous convictions for armed robbery, resisting arrest, and trafficking cocaine. A search of the residence found: 78.2g of heroin/fentanyl, 28g cocaine, 23.6g crack, 1.2g meth, 1 handgun, and recovered stolen property.
- In October 2019, DEU investigators served a search warrant at a residence in the city of Greenville. Investigators discovered approximately 4 grams of heroin, a stolen pistol, and \$4,869 cash. While on the scene, investigators learned of a possible upcoming heroin delivery. That Investigators conducted surveillance and were able to intercept the subject and recover an additional ounce of heroin.
- In November 2019, DEU investigators developed information regarding an individual moving heroin in the Travelers Rest area. Investigators located a vehicle of the known heroin



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trafficker and provided information to a marked uniform patrol officer of the TRPD. The marked TRPD officer made a traffic stop on the vehicle. A search of the vehicle was conducted and located 21 grams of heroin and \$2500 in cash.

- In January 2020, a search warrant was executed at a residence in the city of Greenville. The property owner was located inside and found to have a large amount of US currency on his person (later determined to be \$4,251) and a bag of methamphetamine weighing 1.5g. Additional 30.1g of methamphetamine, 39.3g of heroin, and 94 various pills were discovered in the kitchen of the residence. Two large plastic bags with methamphetamine residue were also found in a bedroom. The larger bags with residue are indicative of an initial large quantity, to be broken down into the smaller bags, which were located in numerous quantities in the same bedroom. There were also scales in the room, which would commonly be used to weigh the drugs for distribution.
- DEU followed up on complaints received from residents of the Spaulding Farm community concerning potential narcotics activity at a residence. Residents reported multiple vehicles would pull in the driveway, pull onto a side street next to a house, and even exchange items in the mailbox near the street. DEU members conducted surveillance and intercepted a vehicle leaving the residence. A search of the vehicle recovered a quantity of narcotics allowing for a search warrant to be obtained. DEU investigators served the search warrant on the address and recovered a quarter ounce of heroin, a gram of fentanyl, and a small assortment of pills.
- DEU investigated a fentanyl/heroin/methamphetamine trafficker for several months. During this time, DEU received several tips on the individual and conducted an intensive investigation. After pinpointing the location where drug sales were occurring, DEU conducted surveillance and obtained a search warrant. DEU served the search warrant on the location and found approximately 52 grams (2 ounces) of fentanyl and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an ounce of methamphetamine along with \$10,527.34 in U.S. currency. The individual was a major distributor of drugs in the western area of Greenville County as well as into the city of Greenville.
- DEU conducted an investigation leading to the discovery of two kilos of hidden heroin. DEU investigators and South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) SA's followed up on information which led them to recover two kilos of heroin are these two separate kilos of heroin buried in a backyard of a residence near Mauldin/Simpsonville. DEU linked the heroin to a prior shooting of an individual who earlier had been killed.



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DEU Overdose Enforcement Initiative

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 70,200 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2017, a 10 percent increase from the previous year. Over 47,600, or over two-thirds, of these overdose deaths were caused by heroin, fentanyl, and prescription opioids. The rise of opioid use follows mainly two distinctive paths in Greenville County - heroin and fentanyl. Fentanyl is a Schedule II synthetic opioid approved for use as a painkiller and anesthetic. The drug's extremely strong opioid properties have made it an attractive drug of abuse for opioid users. Users of heroin and fentanyl cannot estimate the actual level of potency of the drugs and results in numerous opioid related overdoses and deaths.

DEU provides support to the Greenville County Criminal Investigative Divisions and other criminal investigative units across the region, in investigating the sources of supply to overdose victims. Many of the overdoses are believed to have been caused through the ingestion of the abundance of blue colored fentanyl tablets. These tablets are regularly encountered by DEU investigators and are known to be sold as many types of different drugs. Many overdose victims refuse to cooperate; knowing that to do so may remove their supply source. However, DEU has experienced success in pursuing the sources of supply to overdose victims.

- DEU conducted undercover purchases of tablets from an individual known to have sold fentanyl tablets resulting in three drug overdoses. During the operation, DEU maintained surveillance on the individual and were able to follow him to a location where a drug transaction was observed. A traffic stop was performed and the subject was arrested. During an interview, he advised he had purchased and obtained pills from a location identified during the surveillance. A search warrant was served on the location and resulted in the finding of an additional small quantity of pressed fentanyl, cocaine, and a handgun. This individual was the known source of the fentanyl tablets which resulted in the three overdoses. A total of three individuals were arrested.
- DEU and the Laurens County Narcotics Unit were made aware of a mobile home location in the Simpsonville/Fountain Inn section of Greenville County that was selling narcotics. The subjects associated with this residence were



known to sell large quantities of pressed blue fentanyl pills, which were marked and sold as "roxies". Investigators were aware of a possible overdose affiliated with these "blues" earlier acquired from this residence. Surveillance was conducted on this residence and identified known narcotics dealers. The GCSO Traffic Unit assisted DEU and

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conducted stops on vehicles leaving the residence. DEU secured a search warrant for the residence and total of 88 blue pressed fentanyl tablets and a small quantity of marijuana were recovered.

- GCSO deputies responded to a call regarding a victim of an overdose. DEU supported the GSCO Criminal Investigations Division and found information claiming the victim likely obtained the drugs from two individuals. DEU investigators located the address of the two suspected sellers of the drug, conducted a knock and talk, and were provided consent to search the location. Fentanyl, prescription drugs, marijuana and \$1,740 were found during the search.
- DEU received information concerning the seller of heroin to a prior overdose victim. DEU located the seller and conducted a knock and talk at the address of the seller. Investigators were able to secure a search warrant for the location. During the service of the warrant, investigators identified a pregnant female at the address and learned she had secreted several grams of heroin within her body cavity. A body cavity search warrant was obtained and the female was transported to a local hospital for medical professionals to assist in the serving of the search warrant. During the body cavity search, several grams of heroin were recovered.

Clandestine Laboratories/Pill Press

Clandestine fentanyl pill pressing operations are a rising concern to law enforcement in Greenville County and across the state. With an investment into a kilogram of fentanyl illegal pill press, often less than \$500, operators can produce tens of thousands of pressed fentanyl pills. The investment can quickly create vast volumes of illegal cash. Pill presses are purchased from overseas markets, most often China, through online sites. While DEA and CBP must electronically approve the importation of pill presses, the threat of exposure or seizure of unregistered presses is minimal. South Carolina, like most other states, does not have any laws in place that directly addresses illegal pill press operations or the possession of an unregistered press. DEU continues to see the use of pill presses within Greenville County. DEU maintains a high level of specialized training in areas of hazardous materials and safety to address pill press and other clandestine laboratory operations. Additionally, DEU relies on the SC National Guard Civil Response Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) to provide even higher levels of safety to DEU personnel.

- In September 2019, DEU's clandestine laboratory personnel, in support of DEA, responded to a location in Mauldin concerning the operation of a large and clandestine illicit drug laboratory. The response was based on a request by the DEA Greenville Field Office for support in the processing of the laboratory and DEA's investigation. DEU



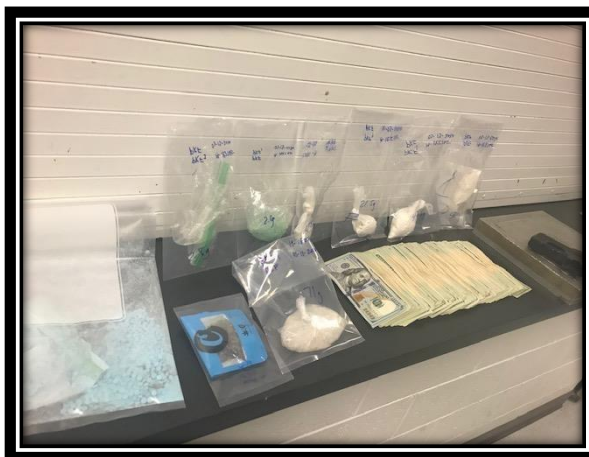
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personnel assisted in securing the location and rendering the location safe for other law enforcement personnel. The clandestine operation contained sophisticated pill presses, chemical powders, tablets, and processing equipment.

- After a long investigation, DEU served a search warrant on a residence in the Berea section of Greenville County. The target of the search warrant was a known heroin dealer who was known to be operating a large pill press machine. DEU enlisted the aid of the GCSO Directed Patrol Unit to intercept the main individual as he left the residence early in the morning. The individual was intercepted as he attempted to mail a package destined for California. DEU located a large room in the residence containing a pill press along with more than 15 pounds of various cutting agents. The entire flooring and walls of the room were covered in powder. DEU investigators also had a concern the powder had drifted throughout the residence. DEU requested the services of the National Guard Civil Support team (Weapons of Mass Destruction) to respond to support DEU in understanding the potential health risks of the residence. THE CRT conducted multiple air tests and collected samples. After several hours, the residence was declared safe for DEU



to process the scene. In addition to the pill press, DEU investigators located a substantial number of finished press pills, potential fentanyl/methamphetamine, and a stolen gun along with a semi-assault rifle. An unknown quantity of U.S. currency was located but believed to be less than \$3,000.



DEU identified individual moving large volumes of fentanyl tablets and heroin. DEU performed surveillance and observed a vehicle arrive and witnessed a transfer of narcotics between the main individual and a second person. The individual observed officers moving to stop him and began to speed and missed a turn crashing his car. The suspect then attempted to flee on foot but was apprehended by DEU officers. A search of the vehicle and person, found several hundred blue tablets field testing as heroin/fentanyl along with approximately \$2,000.

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- DEU obtained three search warrants based on the investigation and stop. A search of one location found a pill press operation. The location contained two pill presses – one an electrical press and the second a mechanical press. Additionally, cutting powder residue and cutting agents were in the location. DEU requested the assistance of the SC National Guard CRST team to respond to perform a hazardous determination of the site. The SCNG responded and conducted analysis of all powders and residue. Amounts of fentanyl and methamphetamine were located. At a second location, DEU found additional quantities of methamphetamine, heroin, and fentanyl along with a kilo type mechanical press. A search of the third location (suspects residence); DEU recovered approximately \$8.000 in U.S. currency. One firearm was also recovered.
- DEU completed a month's long investigation into a major drug supplier to the Greenville area. In May, DEU with support from the GCSO SWAT and GPD SWAT served three search warrants. At locations in Greenville County and the City of Greenville. During the search warrants, a total of the following was found:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 327 blue colored fentanyl○ 80.2 grams of fentanyl○ 63 grams of methamphetamine○ 786 grams of MDMA (ecstasy) gummies○ 49.1 grams of THC gummy tape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 131.8 grams of marijuana○ 82 pressed "counterfeit" oxycodone tablets○ 3.8 grams of black tar heroin○ 2 firearms○ \$8.181 in U.S. currency
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- In June 2020, DEU investigators supported by the GCSO SWAT served a search warrant on a residence located at 402 New Harrison Bridge Road, Simpsonville, S.C. The search warrant was based on a month's long investigation where investigators learned the subjects of the investigation were distributing thousands of pressed pills into Greenville County and surrounding areas of the upstate. Most of the pills this drug gang sold were fentanyl and were being distributed under various



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street names. Investigators developed information that the pills were being pressed at the New Harrison Bridge location and moved quickly to dismantle the operation.

- Investigators found a substantial quantity of finished fentanyl tablets that weighed close to one- pound, 3 ½ ounces of Ecstasy, 2 ounces of crack cocaine, a pound of marijuana, \$7,451.00 and three firearms. Additionally 11 pounds of compression binding agent was found along with two mechanical pill presses. The mechanical pill presses are capable of pressing out hundreds of pills an hour.



METHAMPEHTAMINE

Methamphetamine continues to be most significant threat to Greenville County. Methamphetamine continues to grow in Greenville. According to the Atlanta-Carolinas HIDTA reporting, methamphetamine in the areas of the Carolinas has grown 20% comparing 2017 to 2018. The growth of the methamphetamine trade is reasonably expected to have continued its growth in 2019 especially as observed by DEU investigators. Historically, methamphetamine was seen as being distributed within only Caucasian circles but this trend is no longer true. Within Greenville County, methamphetamine, much like heroin, distribution crosses all races and genders. Interestingly though is methamphetamine usage still remains mostly confined to Caucasian male and females. Because Greenville sits so close to Atlanta, a major distribution point for Mexican drug cartels, the price of methamphetamine within Greenville is fairly cheap. The price of ounce quantities of methamphetamine usually average \$350 to \$400 an ounce and pound quantities of the drug average approximately on average \$4,000. User amounts of the drug can be purchased from \$50 to \$100 a gram. However, Covaid19 did impact the price and availability of methamphetamine on the market. DEU did see the availability of methamphetamine begin to decline in April as well as the price per ounce increasing.

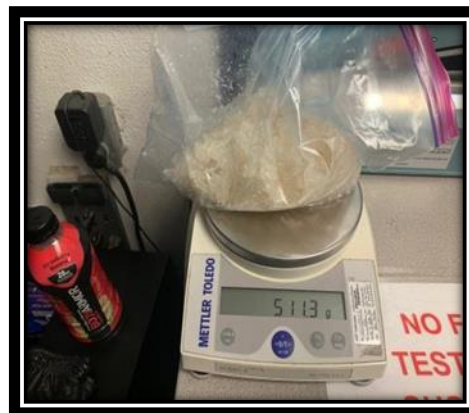
- In November 2019, undercover DEU investigators met with a methamphetamine trafficker in Mauldin. The investigator arranged a purchase of an ounce of methamphetamine at a convenience store in Maudlin. When the trafficker arrived to the meeting location, DEU investigators arrested the trafficker and recovered an ounce of methamphetamine. A search warrant was then served on an apartment in Mauldin where an additional ounce of methamphetamine was found.
- After a lengthy investigation, DEU investigators identified a Mexican organization with potential ties to the



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Sinaloa cartel operating in the Greenville area. During the investigation, DEU purchased several ounces of methamphetamine and one pound of methamphetamine from members of this group. DEU tracked this group to a location outside of Birmingham, Alabama. DEU coordinated efforts with the Jefferson County, Alabama, Sheriff's Office on the movement of one of the cartel's dealers. DEU identified a stash house where the organization distributed large amounts of methamphetamine. A search warrant was obtained on the location and approximately three kilos of methamphetamine and approximately \$6,000 cash was found. The JCSO, Birmingham, AL served a search warrant on location and recovered another 45 grams of methamphetamine, approximately \$15,000 cash and made two arrests.

- DEU identified a known trafficker selling narcotics from a residence in Greer. At the time, the suspect was on probation for drug offenses from Spartanburg County and had been reported to have been moving substantial quantities of methamphetamine into the Greer area. DEU was able to secure a search warrant for the residence. DEU members served the search warrant on the location and recovered methamphetamine (18.2 grams), marijuana (1.4 grams), THC wax (41 grams) and suspected liquid methamphetamine (171 grams weighed in jar).
- DEU identified an individual trafficking methamphetamine out of a motel in Greenville. A coordinated effort with the GCSO Directed Patrol Unit to intercept the individual resulted in a traffic stop of the individual leaving the hotel. A search warrant was obtained for the motel room and the search revealed 65.3g methamphetamine, 6.9g cocaine and 3.6g marijuana located in the individual's motel room.
- DEU investigators were conducting surveillance at a motel in the city of Mauldin. DEU observed a subject that was a known fugitive enter a hotel room. DEU investigators and other officers entered the room and made an arrest. During a protective sweep of the hotel room, investigators observed drug paraphernalia and items that indicated possible drug distribution. A search warrant was obtained and executed, 62.2 gram of methamphetamine and less than a gram of heroin.
- In an effort to identify the connection between Hispanic drug traffickers in the Greenville area to potential cartel connections in Atlanta, Georgia, investigators learned of a trip to Atlanta by one of the associated Greenville traffickers. DEU and the GCSO Interdiction Team determined the vehicle driven by the drug courier was enroute to Greenville on I-85. DEU investigators picked up the vehicle traveling on I-85 near the SC-GA line. DEU staged several vehicles along the travel route.

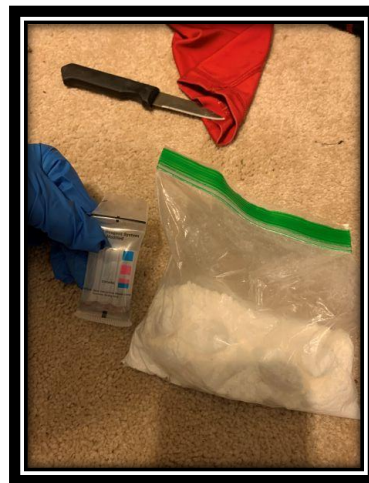


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The vehicle eventually was passed to the Interdiction Team which performed a traffic stop on the targeted vehicle. A subsequent search turned up 1 pound and 2 ounces of high quality crystal methamphetamine. Two subjects were arrested.

Cocaine

Cocaine and cocaine derivatives are available across Greenville County but not at the levels of other powdered forms of narcotics. It is believed due to the easy availability and cost of methamphetamine, cocaine distribution is not as prevalent. DEU did see a resurgence of cocaine seizures as the Covid19 pressure on methamphetamine occurred. Crack cocaine was found in various areas of the county but in limited quantities.



- In May 2020, DEU investigators executed a narcotics search warrant at an address in the city of Greenville. During the search the below listed items were seized:

96.3g	cocaine
142.5g	marijuana
6.6g	suspected psilocybin mushrooms
37.7g	THC concentrate (wax)
10.2g	Blood Orange THC gummies
One (1)	THC vape cartridge

- In January 2019, DEU was advised by the Greer PD Uniform Patrol of the arrest of a drug dealer in the city of Greer. The Greer PD was advised that the person arrested wanted to cooperate with law enforcement officers. DEU responded and debriefed the arrestee. DEU learned of a potential methamphetamine delivery to take place later in Greer. DEU members organized the surveillance and take-down of the suspected vehicle and individual who was identified as the delivery person of the illegal drugs. DEU officers intercepted the vehicle with the assistance of the GCSO DPU. A search of the vehicle identified 28.7 grams of cocaine and 14.8 grams of methamphetamine.

Prescription Fraud

- DEU supported by DHEC special agents pursued an individual in Greenville for operating a prescription mill. The individual would utilize "prescription paper" to

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create falsified prescriptions in multiple names. After the prescriptions were completed, individuals would be paid to travel to pharmacies in the Greenville area, and areas outside of Greenville, to fill the prescriptions. In January 2020, DEU served a search warrant on the target's address and recovered additional falsified prescriptions and other evidence linked to the prescription scheme. From the search, DEU and DHEC identified other subjects involved in the false/counterfeit prescriptions being passed throughout the Greenville County area.

Gambling Crime

- DEU received information concerning an illegal gambling ring operating in areas of the Greenville city limits and throughout Greenville County. The information concerned a "street lottery" and sports betting tickets. According to the information, the "lottery" system" was an illegal cash gambling system with unreported proceeds and payouts based upon regulated state lottery numbers.



In February 2020, DEU members followed an identified gambling manager from an establishment located in the city of Greenville to a money drop-off meeting location. At this location, DEU observed multiple persons meet and exchange gambling monies. Investigators identified the head of the organization and learned

he operated his gambling mecca from a residence located in Greenville County. The individual was found to have a past criminal history and has been arrested for multiple gambling-related offenses including operating a business without a license, possession of lottery tickets, adventuring in lotteries, unlawful games and betting, illegal gambling, and a financial crime of structuring bank transactions to evade reporting income.

In February 2020, the organizer was stopped after he was observed collecting gambling proceeds. A search of the vehicle driven by the individual found numerous envelopes with gambling tickets and various sums of money. DEU investigators secured a search warrant of the residence. The service of the search warrant found a room setup to operate as a command post for logging gambling tickets and logistical point for continuing the gambling operation. Additionally investigators located a large amount of U.S. currency (\$416,000) in a safe, desk drawer, and in hidden areas of a large desk.

Prostitution

DEU investigators followed up on complaints regarding the possibility of a female using a website called "Skip the Games" to conduct prostitution services from a residence in Greenville. Investigators determined the female subject may also be involved in narcotics trafficking offenses. Investigators acting in an undercover capacity were able to arrange a meeting at a residence in Greenville for the purposes of purchasing sexual favors from the female. In December 2019, a DEU undercover investigator arrived at

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the residence given by the subject and after obtaining additional evidence regarding the payment of cash for sexual services an arrest signal was given. DEU team members responded and arrested the subject. A search warrant was served and investigators located 1.7g methamphetamine, 1.9g green plant (possibly spice or some other synthetic), 3.5 green plant material (marijuana), 26.5g waxy material (marijuana wax), 13.5g clear crystal substance (methamphetamine), and .4 grams white rock substance (crack cocaine).

Mutual Partnerships to Combat Drug Trafficking

DEU complements its enforcement efforts by partnering with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), SC Law Enforcement Division (SLED), and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. Currently, DEU has one assigned member that reports directly each day to both DEA and HSI. DEU also provides office space for two SLED SA's to coordinate drug investigations and provide a directed enforcement effort between the two agencies.

Specialized Parcel Enforcement and Response (SPEAR)

DEU recognizes the ease and comfort that narcotics traffickers have found with moving their illegal products and illicit payments not only across the United States but internationally as well. The use of parcel delivery and freight companies offers a quick and historically safe method of conducting narcotic transactions. Drugs and currency regularly flow through the parcel pipelines. Social media applications provide secure means of communication allowing narcotics traffickers to negotiate prices and quantities needed as well as delivery times.

The transaction of illicit substances continues to occur across two platforms - digital transactions and person-to-person meetings. The internet and social media have significantly increased the ease of distributing drugs. It allows drug traffickers and users to conduct transactions with a cloak of secrecy. The legalization of marijuana in some states allows for drug traffickers to operate a business supplying purchasers outside of legitimate channels. Further, open air marijuana markets thrive and DEU is aware of persons traveling from Greenville County to attend these open air markets and obtain marijuana products. The open air markets allow for person-to-person meetings and discussions to occur where prices can be negotiated along with shipping methods. However, the use of parcel and freight to move narcotics and illicit cash is not confined to only marijuana. Large scale methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine traffickers commonly use the same cloak of secrecy to hide their illicit activities. Traffickers are known to monitor their shipments and parcel and freight regulations to exploit vulnerabilities in the delivery transportation network.

With DEU continuing to find evidence of parcel and freight shipments moving narcotics into Greenville County, DEU and SLED entered into an informal agreement to form a parcel and freight investigative team. This team is known as SPEAR – Specialized Parcel Investigations and Response team. DEU has assigned two dedicated investigators to the team and SLED has assigned two special agents. In addition, the two DEU K9's support the initiative on a weekly basis. SPEAR became operational in June 2020 and immediately had success.

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SPEAR Seizures June 2020

Number of Parcels Intercepted	16
THC Candy	41 pounds
THC Liquids	1,600 ounces
THC Vape Cartridges	385
THC Laced Cigars	8.17 pounds
Marijuana	41 pounds



SPEAR worked with Columbia SLED agents at the UPS facility in Columbia as part of the training and identification aspect of the newly created program. While inspecting incoming packages, the team identified 11 parcels of suspicious origination and appearance. SPEAR's participation resulted in the seizure of 34 pounds of marijuana, 8.3 pounds of methamphetamine, ½ pound of mushrooms, and numerous THC vape and edible products.

SC Law Enforcement Division

Prison Empire - DEU supported and continues to support a SC Attorney General State Grand Jury investigation led by SLED titled Prison Empire. The titled icon was code named "Prison Empire" because a large part of the drug trafficking organization was operated by convicted inmates who were currently serving prison sentences inside the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC). To date, the investigation revealed the criminal organization,



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which included both SCDC inmates and their co-defendants on the streets, are responsible trafficking over 500 kilograms of methamphetamine and multiple kilograms of heroin and cocaine, most of which were destined for locations in the Upstate including Greenville County. DEU has supported this effort through surveillance, undercover purchases, intelligence gathering and manpower resource support. A total of 54 individuals were indicted and arrested during the initial phase of this investigation.

- In September 2019, DEU supported SLED in the service of a search warrant of a known heroin/methamphetamine trafficker operating near Greenville and Mauldin. DEU investigators had participated in undercover purchases of heroin earlier from the trafficker. As a result of the service of the search warrant, 4 ounces of methamphetamine, one-quarter ounce of black-tar heroin, and a mixture of synthetic drugs were found. Numerous firearms were located to include handguns and assault type rifles as well as \$5,000 in cash.



- In December 2019, DEU and SLED officers received information reference to a subject who had skipped federal bond on conspiracy to traffic, methamphetamine, and crack cocaine and was attempting to flee the country. SLED SA's and the DEU investigators located the subject entering a Walmart parking lot in the Travelers Rest area. A traffic stop was made and a search of the vehicle yielded 28.11g of a gray substance identified as heroin and fentanyl, 17.3g of methamphetamine, 88.4g of marijuana, a prescription bottle containing 21 pink tablets field identified as methamphetamine and a firearm.
- In December 2019, SLED and DEU officers identified an individual possessing a large quantity of narcotics in the northern area of Greenville County. SLED and DEU officers served a search warrant on a residence in the Travelers Rest area of Greenville County. The search warrant resulted in 30 ounces of methamphetamine, 12 grams of heroin, 3 grams of marijuana, 5 firearms (including one sawed-off shotgun) and \$3,490 was found.
- DEU and SLED conducted a search at a residence in the Piedmont section of Greenville County. As a result of the search, 111.65 grams of methamphetamine; 16.07g of heroin, 3.5 g of cocaine, 14.51 g of



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a marijuana, \$2,967.00, and a 9mm S&W were seized. Additionally, a DEU and SLED recovered 2 ounces of methamphetamine and 7 grams of heroin from a separate location in the Piedmont section of Greenville County.

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)

A critical mission of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations' (HSI) is the investigation, disruption and dismantling of transnational and national criminal organizations that illicitly introduce narcotics into the U.S. and transfer hidden caches of illicit proceeds throughout the U.S. and world. Recognizing the importance of the HSI mission and the need to coordinate investigations with mutual interests, DEU assigned a dedicated investigator to the HSI Greenville Field Office.

- DEU support to the HSI Greenville Field Office in conducting numerous investigations within HSI's area of responsibility - predominantly the upstate area of South Carolina. These investigations have resulted in the seizure of \$1,070,455.00 in illicit criminal proceeds, 593 lbs. of various illegal narcotics, and numerous counterfeit trademark items with a MSRP value exceeding \$694,203. In one particular case, the assigned DEU investigator assisted HSI in a complex white collar fraudulent check scam allowing for \$1.6 million recovery and restitution payments to the victims.
- In September 2019, DEU investigators and HSI SA's with the HSI Greenville Field Office were alerted to a large shipment of heroin and methamphetamine destined for the Greenville area. The shipment is believed to be connected to a Hispanic drug trafficking organization that regularly shipped large amount of illicit drugs to the area. DEU and HSI law enforcement personnel seized 4 pounds of heroin and 9 pounds of methamphetamine.
- In November 2019, the HSI Greenville Field Office was informed by US Customs officers that a package originating from the Netherlands with a recipient in the Taylors area of Greenville County had been intercepted. The package contained approximately 143 grams of ecstasy pressed in numerous tablet forms. The parcel and investigation was turned over to DEU and a controlled delivery was arranged. The parcel was delivered to the location but the addressed recipient was not present.

Drug Enforcement Agency(DEA)

The DEA disrupts and dismantles major drug trafficking supply organizations and their networks worldwide. The DEA Greenville Field Office is a major component combatting the illicit trafficking of narcotics into Greenville County. DEU assigned an investigator to the DEA Greenville Field Office in an effort to collect and share intelligence to identify trafficking groups and the continuous moving trends of the narcotics world.

- In October 2018, the Greenville, South Carolina HIDTA Initiative conducted a Priority Target / Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation named "The Reckoning". This investigation identified a Mexican

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DTO involved with the transportation and distribution of kilogram quantities of cocaine to the upstate region of South Carolina from Mexico.

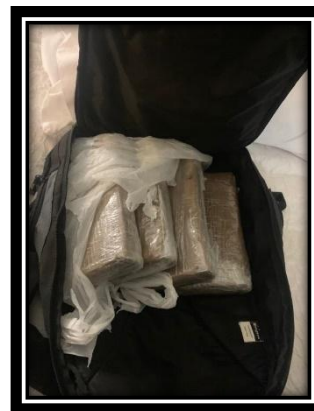
In September 2019, the DEU investigator assigned to DEA began to assist in the continuing investigation. In September 2019, a major Greenville County drug trafficker was stopped by the Georgia State Patrol (GSP) in Franklin County, Georgia. The stop led to a roadside investigation, resulting in the seizure of approximately 22 kilograms of cocaine, and 17 pounds of marijuana. Based on text data and toll information it was confirmed the Greenville target had been in contact with a Mexican head of a DTO. The investigation found the Greenville target traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, met with the Mexican head for the purpose of obtaining drugs from him, and then returned to South Carolina. During the course of the investigation, DEA was able to seize \$165,895.00 from identified Mexican money brokers dealing with the identified Mexican organizer.

- In February 11, 2020, two search warrants and an arrest warrant were executed in Atlanta on the DTO investigation. The search warrants resulted in the arrest of the head of the DTO and the seizure of approximately ½ kilogram of heroin and 100 pounds marijuana. In addition, \$40,000.00 in U.S. Currency was seized along with a GMC Sierra, fine art, and two Rolex watches.

As an investigative follow-up in March 2020, a search warrant was executed in the Travelers Rest area belonging to the Greenville County trafficker. The search warrant resulted in the seizure of 2 kilograms cocaine, ½ kilogram heroin, and 5 kilograms marijuana and \$161,675.00 U.S. currency were seized.

In total, this investigation resulted in six wire intercepts and has yielded 5 arrests and the seizure of 24 kilograms cocaine, 1 kilogram heroin, and 110 pounds marijuana. In addition, \$481,440.00 U.S. currency was seized along with a GMC Sierra, fine art, and two Rolex watches.

- In January 2020, DEA and DEU learned of a major cocaine transfer to take place at a local hotel in the Travelers Rest area of Greenville. DEA and DEU identified two Hispanic males at the hotel and approached the two. From the investigation, 4 kilograms of cocaine was recovered in the hotel room. The investigation continued and an additional one-pound quantity of heroin was recovered from a residence in Travelers Rest.



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- DEU learned that a package of illegal narcotics was being mailed to an address in Greenville city. DEU, DEA and the USPS Inspection Service intercepted the package prior to its delivery and identified 2 lbs. of crystal methamphetamine.
- A search warrant was executed at a residence in the city of Greenville as a result of a joint investigation by the DEU, DEA, FASIT, and DEA. A stolen firearm and a bag of gray rock-like substance were located. The gray rock-like substance was determined to be two ounces of fentanyl. Additionally, investigators interdicted a parcel coming to the residence that later was found to contain 1 pound of methamphetamine. A second search warrant was executed at a location in Greenville County where several clear baggies were located containing fentanyl, a kilo press, and a stolen firearm.