

DRUG & VIOLENT CRIME TASK FORCES

2012 Annual Report

July 2012

Prepared by the Office of Justice Programs – Minnesota Department of Public Safety

BACKGROUND

Narcotics Task Forces – Since 1988, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Programs has funded multijurisdictional narcotics and gang task forces with funding provided by the State of Minnesota and the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. This funding supports programs that integrate law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to conduct effective, multijurisdictional drug and violent crime investigations and prosecutions. Federal and state resources provide \$9 million in funding to support the operations of multijurisdictional task forces in the SFY 12-13 biennium. This is in addition to significant local contributions of cash and personnel, as well as in-kind contributions.

There are currently twenty-three funded task forces that span sixty-five counties. The task forces are staffed by over 200 investigators from over 115 police agencies. An additional 53 police agencies provide non-personnel support to the task forces. Annual grant amounts range from \$33,775 to \$480,750. The work of the task force teams is supported by an appointed Statewide Gang and Drug Coordinator; an experienced sworn officer who provides training, monitoring and technical assistance services to all funded task forces. Task force officers also sought to develop their own professional skills, completing 9,020 hours of POST certified training in 2011.

From 1988 to 2004, the Narcotics Enforcement Coordinating Committee (NECC), an informal advisory body, provided guidance to the Commissioner of Public Safety on matters relating to the multijurisdictional drug task forces. The 2005 Minnesota Legislature passed legislation to formalize the coordination of gang and drug enforcement efforts throughout the state. The Gang and Drug Oversight Council was established to provide leadership for those efforts.

Subsequently, the 2010 Minnesota Legislature established the **VIOLENT CRIMES COORDINATING COUNCIL (“VCCC”)** to provide guidance related to the investigation and prosecution of gang crime, drug crime and related violent crime. The Council is comprised of 19 voting members that represent federal, state and local law enforcement and prosecution agencies and includes four citizen members. The council provides direction and oversight to the multijurisdictional task forces and enforcement teams located throughout the state. This new council replaced the Gang and Drug Oversight Council that had been in existence since 2005.

The council’s primary duty is to “develop an overall strategy to ameliorate the harm caused to the public by gang and drug crime within the State of Minnesota”. In addition, the council works closely with the Commissioner of Public Safety and is charged with additional responsibilities:

- The development of an operating procedures and policies manual to guide gang and drug investigation;
- The identification and recommendation of an individual to serve as the statewide gang and drug coordinator;
- The development of grant eligibility criteria and application review process;
- The recommendation for multijurisdictional task force funding termination for those not operating in a manner consistent with the best interest of the state or the public;
- The development of processes to collect and share investigative data;

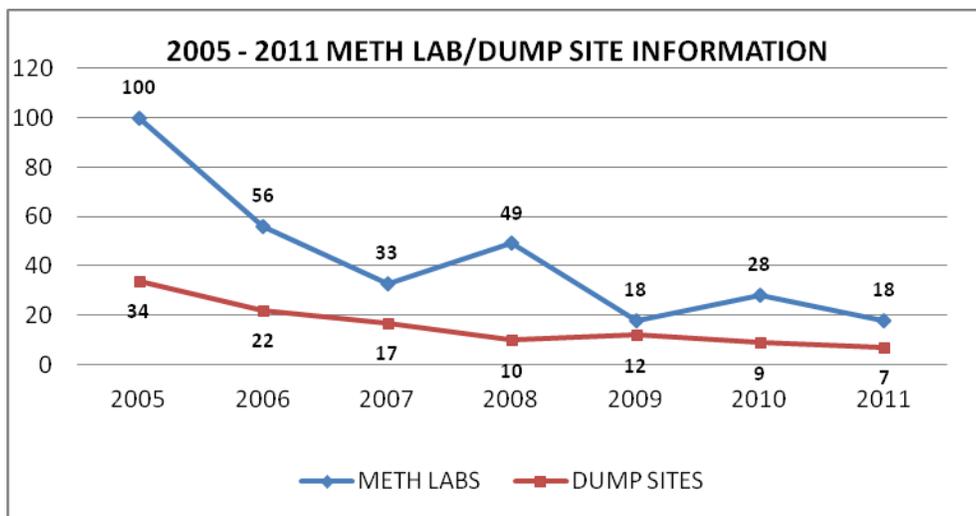
- The development of policies to prohibit the improper use of personal characteristics to target individuals for law enforcement, prosecution or forfeiture actions; and ,
- The adoption of objective criteria and identifying characteristics for use in determining whether individuals are or may be members of gangs involved in criminal activity.

STATEWIDE THREAT ASSESSMENT

As a part of their application for funding that was completed in the Fall of 2011, each task force was asked to comment on the current threats and emerging trends they were facing within their service area. They also report on emerging trends when they prepare extensive quarterly narrative reports submitted to the office of Justice Programs. A summary follows.

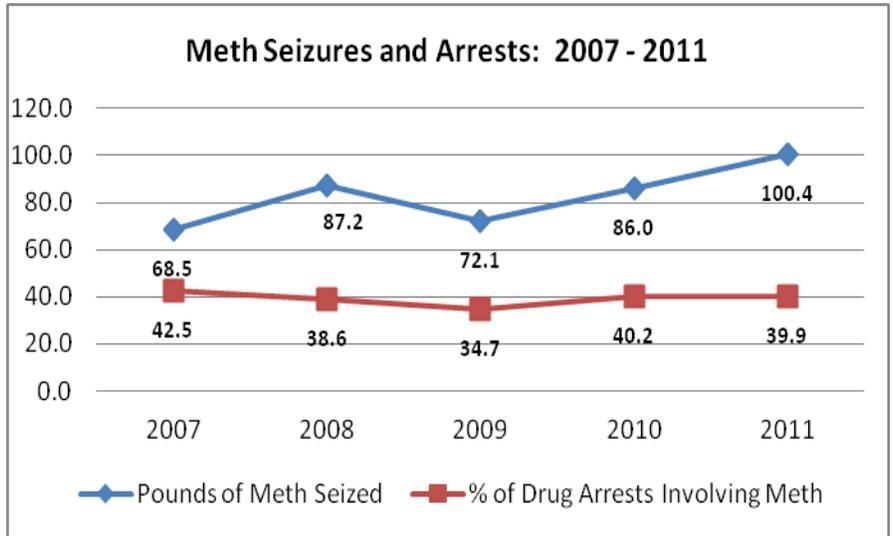
DRUG ASSESSMENT

The wide spread production of methamphetamine has continued to taper off, with most regions reporting significant drops in lab seizures since 2004. After a brief uptick in 2010, the year 2011 indicated a downward trend. The reduction over time is largely attributed to legislation restricting access to precursor ingredients needed in the production of methamphetamine. However, some regions are now reporting smaller scale (and “one pot”) production of methamphetamine. Task force reports in 2011 indicated anhydrous thefts and the identification of individuals buying significant amounts of precursor drugs. It is assumed that most individuals involved are producing quantities for personal use.

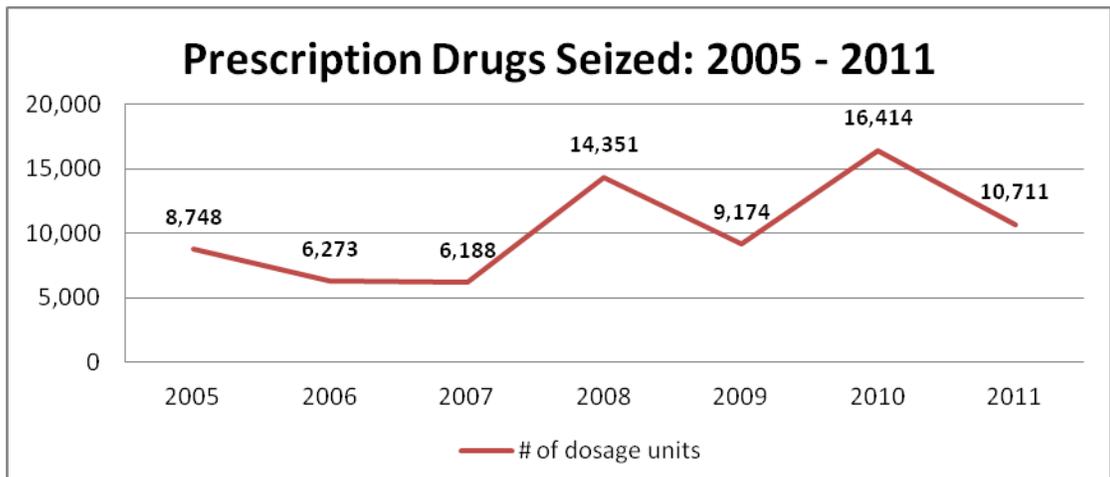


Despite the statewide reduction in the manufacture of methamphetamine, it continues to be the greatest concern for many of the task force regions in the state. Increasingly, large quantities of high grade methamphetamine are being trafficked into the area from the southwest U.S. and Mexico. Evidence of intravenous use of methamphetamine has increased in some task force areas. This all comes along with high rates of property crimes, child abuse and neglect, and the drain on social services agencies that are seeing families affected by addiction to

methamphetamine. Fortunately, use by minors has decreased due to the success of anti-methamphetamine advertising campaigns.

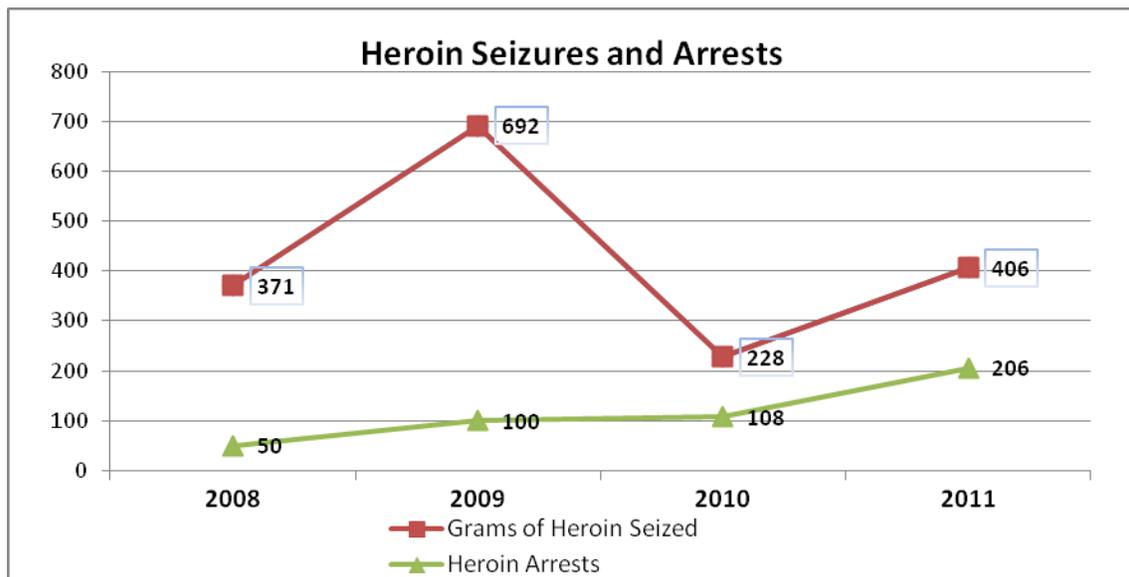


The abuse and illegal sale of pharmaceutical drugs, such as OxyContin, has also significantly increased. Seizures and arrests involve both pills and fentanyl patches. This has been a particular problem on Indian reservations in the northern part of the state. In fact, both the White Earth and Red Lake nations declared public health emergencies related to prescription drug abuse. In 2005, prescription drugs were involved in 4.5% of drug arrests and that number increased to 14.4% in 2011. Task forces have reported some significant sale cases where large quantities of OxyContin have been sold. At an average cost of \$1.00/milligram, there is a high profit margin on the sale of the drug. Illicit sellers are getting their product from forged prescriptions, “doctor shopping”, paid procurers of the drug and pharmacy burglaries. There have been an alarming number of minors and young adults abusing prescription medications. Individuals often take it from household medicine cabinets or receive it or buy it from friends.



Historically, increases in the abuse of prescription pain killers including OxyContin; morphine; codeine; and fentanyl patches, reduced the demand for heroin. This is no longer true as

investigators have seen an increase in the trafficking and use of heroin. In fact, the abuse of pharmaceuticals appears to be a gateway to heroin. Many users have transitioned to heroin due to the high price of pharmaceuticals. Minnesota has been identified as the state that has the lowest price and highest purity of heroin available. Heroin related overdose deaths and hospital emergency room visits increased significantly in 2011. Past use of heroin by 12th graders in Minnesota is above the national average. Heroin arrests increased 412% from 2008 to 2011. While the majority of arrests have been in the metro area, Duluth and Greater Minnesota task force jurisdictions including Indian reservations; other areas throughout the state are beginning to see the emergence of heroin use and trafficking. Most troubling is that the user profile is predominantly young people ages 16 – 28.



* 2011 does not include a one-time extraordinary seizure of 3,616 grams

Marijuana is undoubtedly the most commonly abused and readily available drug throughout the state. The potency of marijuana has risen with higher concentrations of THC found in seized samples. It is cultivated locally and imported from Canada and source states along the border with Mexico. Task forces have also noted importation from the medicinal marijuana states of California and Colorado, In terms of local production, indoor marijuana grow operations continue, but at a lower rate this past year. Grow operations are often more sophisticated than seen in the past. Nationwide, the environmental and health hazards of such operations are becoming apparent.

The importation and local cultivation of marijuana continues to be a significant target for task forces primarily with high volume trafficking and the dismantling of grow operations. In 2011, task forces seized over 6,000 pounds of marijuana and marijuana was associated with 38% of all drug arrests. The sale of marijuana is very profitable and is often associated with violence. According to the local Drug Enforcement Administration office, an ounce of fairly low quality Mexican marijuana retails for \$150 - \$175. The lack of serious criminal consequences for cultivators and sellers of marijuana makes it difficult to disrupt the supply of this very available drug.

While cocaine and crack cocaine continues to be a fairly common drug of abuse it is declining in popularity for distribution and use throughout the state. The amounts encountered by task forces are lower, but the cost has increased significantly. Cocaine and crack cocaine are more prevalent in the Mankato, Rochester, southwestern metro and Duluth areas. In these areas, the importation and distribution of the drug is often gang related. In Greater Minnesota, the principal wholesale distribution centers for cocaine and crack cocaine are Minneapolis, Chicago and Detroit.

Other substances have also presented challenges for law enforcement in 2011.

- Synthetic marijuana products (K2, Spice, Blade, Red X Dawn, etc.) have been found in many parts of the state and have become increasingly popular, particularly among teens and young adults. These products consist of plant material that has been coated with chemicals that claim to mimic THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, and are sold at a variety of retail outlets, in head shops, and over the Internet. These products that can cause serious side effects for users. There have been an increasing number of reports from poison control centers, hospitals and law enforcement regarding these products.
- Mephedrone is also being sold in both the metro and greater Minnesota areas. This is a synthetic stimulant. It is reportedly manufactured in China and is chemically similar to the compounds found in khat. It comes in the form of tablets or a powder, which users can swallow, snort or inject, producing similar effects to MDMA, amphetamines and cocaine. In the USA it can be sold legally if labeled as 'plant food' or 'bath salts'.

In several areas of the state, synthetic drug use has escalated rapidly with calls for service for both medical and law enforcement personnel on the rise. A well-known case in Blaine, Minnesota led to the death of a 19 year old male. Long term effects of these drugs are still unknown, but use of these substances often leads to suicide threats or other erratic actions that sometimes includes assaultive behavior.

GANG AND VIOLENT CRIME ASSESSMENT

According to many task force reports, gang activity related to the sale and distribution of narcotics continues. In addition to narcotics violations, weapons violations appear to be the criminal activity of choice. Prostitution and other forms of human trafficking and victimization of women are also criminal ventures for some street gangs. Investigators continue to see evidence that some gang members have moved away from collective activity to a more individualized criminal enterprise. Members from once rival gangs are reported to be working together, on an individual basis, in narcotics sales and stolen goods. These gang members appear to prioritize monetary gain over turf and membership issues.

Many regions are reporting intensified recruiting efforts by gangs, and many gang members from major metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Minneapolis and Detroit are moving into rural regions for criminal purposes. The Surenos 13 is the fastest growing gang in Minnesota. This is a gang that has a history of violence and connections to drug cartels in South America. Another growing gang threat in Minnesota, particularly within the Twin Cities and Rochester areas, is from the evolution of Somali gangs. Somali gangs are believed to be responsible for crimes ranging from drive by

shootings to drug activity. It has been difficult for law enforcement to penetrate these gangs due to language and cultural barriers as well as the “closed network” in which they operate.

Both metro and rural task forces are experiencing an increase in the size and violence of hybrid gangs as they attempt to gain power. Individuals may join one or more of these loosely affiliated “gangs” that have no organized leadership or code of conduct. In the case of hybrid gangs, rival gang members are more apt to work together in criminal endeavors. The metro area reports that currently, gangs tend to be smaller and more factionalized with violence becoming less about drug territory and more about on-going feuds.

The primary distributors of the three most common drugs (cocaine, meth and marijuana) are Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). As a result, illegal drugs are becoming available in increasing amounts. The use of extreme violence by DTO’s is well documented as they advance their interests in Mexico as well as the United States. Some of these organizations have connections to the La Familia gang and there are multiple cells operating within the northern portion of Dakota County. It is only logical that their presence will continue to grow in the twin cities area.

Outlaw motorcycle gangs operate throughout the state and prison based gang members reside in many parts of the state. Gangs operating in Minnesota include the Sons of Silence, Hells Angels, Hells Outcasts, Las Valientes and Outlaws. Task forces see an increase in the recruiting of new members by all the motorcycle gangs and clubs. The Supreme White Power “SWP” prison gang members are active in the Iron Range area after recently being paroled. Members of the local task force (with assistance from the MN BCA) are continuing to monitor and attempting to build a case against a number of Supreme White Power “SWP” members that are suspected in methamphetamine sales throughout the Iron Range area. Several members of this group have lengthy and violent criminal histories and pose a serious safety threat.

Native gangs pose significant threats on tribal lands and in parts of the Twin Cities. There has been a significant increase in gang violence in the state and local areas involving the Native Mob and associates. During the past 12-18 months Native Mob members and associates have been the victim of drive-by shootings, assaults and other violence. It has been reported that as older members of the Native Mob are being released from prison the gang is becoming more structured and organized throughout the state. This is substantiated by Department of Corrections investigations and informant information. There has also been an increase in 'council' meetings for the Native Mob across the state.

Violence in the community has increased and in many cases is violence for the sake of violence. Task forces report increases in armed robberies and burglaries. The frequency of weapons seized during investigations continues to increase. High capacity guns are not unique. The firearm issue has resulted in task forces using a variety of tactics to promote officer and community safety. Whenever possible, suspects that have potential to be violent or have access to weapons are arrested in tightly controlled situations. It is not unusual for some gang members, particularly members of outlaw motorcycle gangs, to have a permit to carry a firearm. Removal of guns and gun permits through felony criminal charges is a strategy used to disrupt structures within gangs.

In discussing the escalating violence being encountered, one task force reported that “We continue to seize many handguns during our operations and search warrants. The suspects we are arresting are more willing to flee, fight and use any means possible to evade arrest or injure officers. During one of our operations in the first quarter of 2012 an officer had to shoot a suspect who pointed a gun at him during an arrest. Two guns were recovered from two suspects along with a large amount of meth.”

Task forces have also noted that they are experiencing more shoplifting, check forgery, burglaries, auto thefts and thefts from autos over the last two years. They speculate that these crimes are often related to repeat offenders who commit these crimes to obtain drugs by trading or selling the stolen property. Home invasions are also becoming more common and drug “rips” can be lucrative and low risk due to infrequent reporting by the victims.

OPERATIONAL TRENDS

Task force methods have become more analytical and technology driven over the last several years. Many task forces have added or increased the number of analysts assigned to their units. Analyst work involves detailed research and analysis of criminal information in order to develop links between criminals and crime groups or patterns of criminal activity.

Criminals are using social media to promote their criminal activities and recruit gang members and lure victims. In turn, investigators and analysts often use social media to identify suspects and build criminal cases. Traditional media and social media are also being used by law enforcement for crime alerts, solicitation of anonymous tips and public awareness and education.

Increasing internet sales of synthetic drugs and shipments of marijuana and other illegal substances to local distributors have led to cooperative working relationships between task forces and postal/parcel delivery personnel. Drug detection dogs are often used with suspicious packages and controlled deliveries then lead to search warrants and arrests.

BENEFITS OF THE TASK FORCE MODEL

In their regular reporting, task forces provide testimony and examples of the benefits of the task force approach and examples of how collaboration has fostered success. In the words of one task force commander, “We also have had some luck in identifying out-of-the-area sources and pass that information on to other task forces and agencies or collaborate with them on continuing the investigation. Collaborating with other law enforcement fosters information and resource sharing and creates relationships that are mutually beneficial.” The situation in the past where there was competition for good cases has been replaced by cooperation. Data from 2010 indicate the highest degree of cooperation ever experienced with over 1,500 cases worked collaboratively with another law enforcement entity.

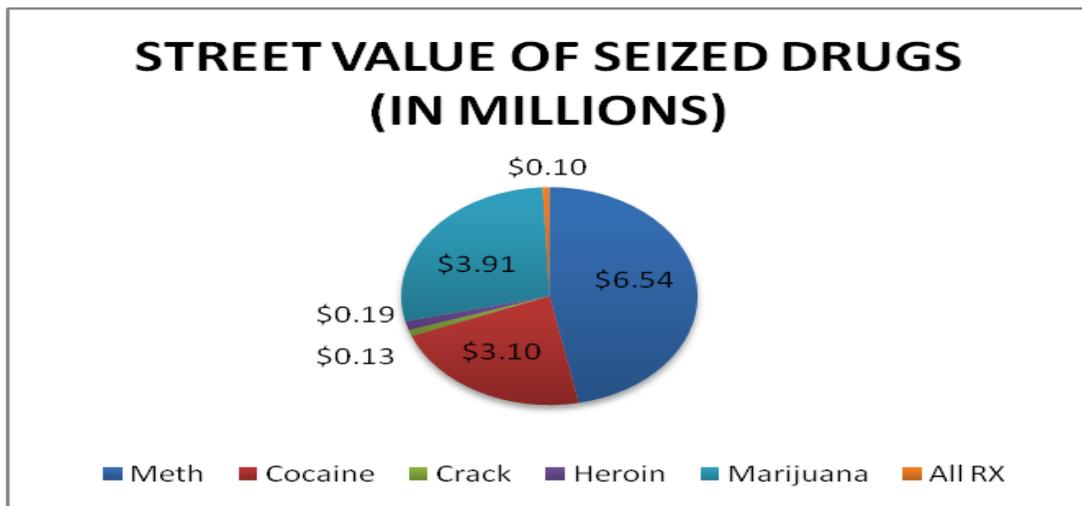
In previous examinations of the task force model as employed in Minnesota, the following were identified as benefits: (1) The level of expertise and knowledge increases when you combine a

variety of experience and training in one location; (2) Task force officers have access to training not readily available to officers on other assignments; (3) When officers return to their home agencies, they take that experience, training and their resources back to their departments; (4) Co-location provides for constant communication between task force members and helps to build rapport, trust and solid relationships. It also provides an atmosphere where a wide variety of techniques and experiences can be consulted while discussing and planning investigative activities; (5) Task forces frequently provide assistance and resources to other law enforcement agencies during other non-drug investigations. That assistance is usually welcomed by other agencies, and helps task forces produce positive results and create a favorable image within the law enforcement community.

RESULTS OF 2011 TASK FORCE OPERATIONS

The following is a summary of task force results throughout the state.

Drug Enforcement - In calendar year 2011, task forces made 3,522 arrests for narcotics violations with 92% of the arrests at a felony-level. Individuals prosecuted at the federal level numbered 196. Of the arrests, 39.9% involved methamphetamine, 37.7% involved marijuana, 14.4% involved prescription drugs, 15.2% involved cocaine/crack cocaine and 5.9% involved heroin. In the course of their investigations, task forces seized 18 methamphetamine labs, 50 pounds of cocaine/crack cocaine, 100 pounds of methamphetamine, 8.5 pounds of heroin, 2092 dosage units of ecstasy, over 10,000 dosage units of prescription drugs, 6,038 pounds of marijuana and 5,320 cultivated marijuana plants. Firearm seizures totaled 687. In addition to drug arrests, task force officers made 417 arrests for other criminal activity.



TOTAL of \$14 million including all task forces, VOTF's and the St. Cloud MGSF

Results over the last five years indicate that task forces are improving and addressing what the program intends: major cases that have the potential to significantly affect drug trafficking and related crimes within their regions. The year 2007 saw the highest results ever in terms of: percentage of felony arrests and the percentage of cases prosecuted federally. In 2009, the highest percentage of drug arrests for “sales” was attained. Working these complex cases requires

collaboration with other task forces, as well as other local, state and federal agencies. Data from 2011 indicates that approximately 40% of all the cases worked by task forces were done in cooperation with another local, state or federal law enforcement entity.

Gang Specialists Assigned to Task Forces - In 2011, there were 9 task forces outside the metro area that had a total of 17 assigned gang officers. In addition, 3 suburban task forces added gang and violent crime specialists in 2010 to ensure that specialized gang knowledge was not lost with the demise of the Metro Gang Strike Force. Other metro agencies also incorporated gang specialists to their task forces. These officers worked hand in hand with the drug agents and their specialized knowledge of gangs, gang crimes and gang members enhanced the work of the task forces. Specifically, of the arrests noted above under “drug enforcement,” 103 of the arrests were of suspected or confirmed gang members. Of the non-drug arrests noted, there were 17 violent Part I crimes, 7 non-violent Part I crimes and 16 Part II crimes committed by suspected or confirmed gang members. In addition, 29 individuals were arrested for outstanding warrants or probation violation. Eighteen of those arrested were charged federally. Twenty-five handguns were seized from gang members. In addition to enforcement activities, gang officers made 105 presentations to over 3300 individuals.

In assessing the value of having knowledgeable gang specialists serving as investigators in task forces one task force indicated: “investigators were successful in working a heroin sales case and charging a long time heroin dealer in the Twin Ports. A previously documented Gangster Disciple was charged with 1st degree possession with intent to distribute heroin, multiple counts of 3rd degree sale of heroin and possession of a firearm by a prohibited person.

St. Cloud Metro Gang Strike Force - This multijurisdictional effort between the City of St. Cloud and Sherburne County began in 2007. For 2011 the unit reported 80 felony-level drug arrests. Thirty-five of the individuals arrested were confirmed gang members. Sixteen additional arrests were made for felony-level violent offenses and eleven of those arrested were confirmed gang members. Thirty-one additional arrests were made for non-felony drug arrests, non-violent Part I offenses and other Part II offenses. Probation violation or outstanding warrants accounted for nineteen arrests. In the course of their work they executed 27 search warrants, seized 15 firearms, and took quantities of crack, marijuana and meth off the streets; most notably over 90 pounds of marijuana. They responded to 72 requests for assistance from other units/agencies and expended over 560 person hours in doing so. In addition to their enforcement duties they made 14 presentations to 705 individuals.

In early 2011, the strike force noted that three gangsters broke into a residence carrying weapons and firing shots. They were arrested for 1st degree burglary, 2nd degree assault, and felon in possession of a firearm. They pled guilty and were sentenced to 150 months. These gang members were also suspects in other burglaries and controlled substance crimes.

In reporting trends, the SCMGSF notes that gang members affiliated with different gangs often work together to distribute controlled substances. The pursuit of profit often trumps gang rivalries.

Effective January 1, 2012, the St. Cloud Gang Strike Force merged with the Central Minnesota Gang and Drug Task Force to form the Central Minnesota Violent Offender Task Force (CMVOTF). The creation of the CMVOTF will make investigations in the St. Cloud and surrounding areas much more efficient. All investigators will work together as a unified team that is able to be more productive with increased manpower and resources. Communication between the investigators will be greatly improved as there are no longer two task forces in the area with similar objectives and targets. The residents of the task force area will also benefit from this merger by having a cohesive group focused on violent and persistent criminal activity in the area.

Violent Offender Task Forces - Newly funded in 2008 were two task forces in Hennepin County that target violent offenders. The Violent Offender Task Forces (VOTFs) were started as a new strategy in combating violent crimes that was increasing in some neighborhoods in Minneapolis and the surrounding suburbs.

Analyses of the problem showed clearly that the vast majority of the violence was due to guns and drugs but, more importantly, that the same individuals were at the core of the problem time and time again. An overloaded system was ineffectively dealing with the same repeat violent offenders continually engaged in narcotics trafficking, gang activity and related violence.

To deal with these challenges, task forces were formed that consist of local and federal investigators and prosecutors. The rationale behind the VOTFs is: rather than target a specific crime (i.e. narcotics, robbery, etc.), target the individuals who are repeatedly causing the violent crimes. The methods of investigation in these cases are lengthy, complex and resource intensive. In 2010, the Minneapolis VOTF was reconfigured as a FBI "Safe Streets" task force and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and the St. Paul Police Department joined the effort.

In 2011, the two Violent Offender Task Forces demonstrated meaningful results. In some instances they work cases jointly. The VOTFs executed 264 search warrants and seized 150 firearms, including 53 handguns and 65 semi-automatic weapons. Substantial amounts of narcotics were also seized including: 19.5 pounds of cocaine and crack cocaine, 49 pounds of marijuana, and, 11.8 pounds of methamphetamine. Over 100 individuals were arrested for probation violations or outstanding warrants. They charged 190 individuals for narcotics and violent crime violations, and 36 of those individuals were charged in federal court. Many of the arrested individuals were gang-affiliated. Of those who were federally indicted, almost all dependents pled guilty to crimes that will result in sentences averaging ten years. In addition to their own arrests, the two VOTFs participated in the arrests of other individuals while responding to requests for assistance from other law enforcement entities. In addition to their enforcement work, the VOTF's made presentations to over 800 people. The Safe Streets Task Force had multiple long-term gang-related investigations underway in 2011. The investigations were designed to disrupt and dismantle organized criminal activity by targeting the organization instead of individuals. These investigations have been worked collaboratively with a number of state and local agencies and task forces.

There are several excellent examples of the impact that the VOTFs are having on the quality of life and crime within neighborhoods in the metro area. The Safe Streets initiative developed information

about gang shootings that were planned to occur during a major event in St. Paul. Suspects were identified and the violence prevented. In December 2011, Hennepin County VOTF personnel were on a surveillance operation in North Minneapolis. During this detail, VOTF personnel observed the suspect and two other male parties conduct a robbery of a person at gun point. Investigators effected an arrest of the suspect and the two other male parties fled on foot. A perimeter was set up and a second suspect was arrested a short time later. A K-9 officer conducted a search and recovered two handguns. A follow up search warrant was executed and a third firearm and gang photos were recovered. The primary suspect was charged with Prohibited Person in Possession of a Firearm and two counts of Aggravated Robbery. His accomplice was charged with two counts of 1st Degree Aggravated Robbery. The two arrested individuals are documented gang members and identified "Top 20 Violent Offenders."

Partnership with the National Guard Counterdrug Program - The National Guard Counterdrug Program has been a welcome partner and is very interactive with task forces statewide. The Counterdrug Program has embedded National Guard crime analysts in several federal agencies and multijurisdictional task forces around the state. This has greatly improved the ability of law enforcement agencies to analyze and share case-related information. The Guard's Counterdrug Program also provides materials and assistance for counterdrug training courses and they provided financial assistance to the Midwest Counterdrug Training Center (MCTC) to sponsor thirty training classes available free of charge to law enforcement officers in Minnesota and adjoining states.

Prevention and Education -It is important to note that beyond their objective of combating drug trafficking through law enforcement, task force officers spent a significant amount of time educating other criminal justice personnel, health professionals, teachers, parents and members of the public about drugs and gangs. In the words of one task force, "officers gave five presentations to community groups, schools, and law enforcement and news agencies. These presentations are an opportunity to inform the public of our presence and give rudimentary training on drug and gang activity in the task force area. We also work with local law enforcement to keep them abreast of gang activity, drug trends, and legal updates pertaining to narcotics and search and seizure". In 2011, task force officers made 372 presentations with a total attendance of 14,577 people.

Many task forces are sponsoring or participating in drug "take-back" events which have been very successful. For example, the **Washington County Drug Task Force** reported in October 2011 that "our third Drug Take-Back event in the County was a success, with several hundred pounds of prescription drugs gathered from the public. We plan on participating in drug take-back event(s) in 2012. We are currently working with the County to set up a permanent site at the Sheriff's Office for prescription drug drop off. This program is set to launch in the 1st quarter of 2012."

The Kandiyohi County Board received a briefing from the **CEE-VI Drug & Gang Task Force** about their current operations and local trends. The meeting was televised over local cable TV. The task force commander noted, "it is important for them to know not only the numbers of arrests but also the stories that go with it and the unique situation our county is facing. "

Task force personnel also participate in many local initiatives aimed at reducing the demand for drugs and sharing enforcement strategies to address emerging issues. For example the **Southeast Minnesota Task Force** Commander, Olmsted County Sheriff, and chief of the Rochester Police Department continue to work with the United Way with the “Community Gang Initiative”. Also participating is the Olmsted County Attorney, Mayor of Rochester, and the Director of Olmsted County of Public Health, Dodge/Fillmore/Olmsted Community Corrections, Rochester Schools, Boys and Girls Club, Editor of the Post Bulletin and other local agencies.

Another example is that in response to an emerging trend, the Southwest Metro Task Force produced a PowerPoint slide show educating people about synthetic marijuana and the problems and dangers associated with its use. It has been presented to the emergency room staff at one of the local hospitals and was shared with local school liaison officers. It was subsequently presented to the counselors at a local high school who then showed it to the all of the 9th grade health classes. At their request, it was presented to one of the local city councils who are acting on banning the substances.

Last, but not least, task force officers engage in prevention in specific and sometimes a very personal way. The following are just a few examples:

- Ramsey County VCET officers participated in the fishing event sponsored by the Neighborhood House. It was a daylong event where the officers brought their own boats and fished with youth to provide a positive experience to youth attending the event. A good time was had by all.
- Agents of the CEE-VI Task Force overheard radio traffic from a local ambulance service related to a critical situation involving an elderly female. Agents responded to the unresponsive female in order to assist the lone paramedic. Due to the quick response, the individual walked out of the hospital a short time later. Because of their help and their family being present when agents arrived, they received a handwritten note from the family thanking them for their hard work.
- The BLLRR Task Force commander continued to do his radio talk show "Twenty Minutes with the Task Force." Most recently he discussed the widespread abuse of prescription drugs.

ATTACHMENTS

- Gang and Drug Case Summaries
- Map of 2012 Drug and Violent Crime Enforcement Teams
 - List of 2012 Task Force Grants
- List of Violent Crime Coordinating Council Members

GANG and DRUG CASE SUMMARIES

The following are selected summaries of completed or active investigations. These are examples as to the types of investigations and types of illegal activities being committed by different criminal elements throughout the state.

The **Dakota County Task Force**, along with the Ramsey County Violent Crime Enforcement Team, conducted a joint operation with search warrants executed in St. Paul and South St. Paul. The searches resulted in the seizure of over a pound of methamphetamine, illegal firearms, and more than \$60,000 in cash. Three illegal aliens from Mexico were charged in federal court and deported.

During the month of August 2011, agents of the **Dakota County Task Force** assisted the Eagan Police Department with a home invasion and shooting over a drug deal gone wrong. The task force was a crucial component in this investigation by developing the needed information to execute a search warrant and bring the case to a successful resolution.

In February 2011, the **Southeast Minnesota Task Force** arrested 3 people in Fillmore County for various charges related to methamphetamine. The suspects were charge with sales, possession, and manufacturing of meth. The suspects were also charged with child endangerment. The suspect admitted to manufacturing meth 22 times in 30 days. One of the suspects was taken into custody by the United States Marshals Service and will face federal charges for failing to register as a sex offender.

In October 2011, the **Buffalo Ridge Task Force** agents acted on anonymous tips and executed a rural Nobles County search warrant that resulted in the seizure of 35 cultivated marijuana plants and ten firearms. The suspect provided a statement and claimed that he had been growing marijuana in Minnesota and Wisconsin for the past 20 years. The suspect sold marijuana throughout the area and was a source of supply to high-school students. December 2011 activities included surveillance in Pipestone County that led to the execution of a search warrant. Meth was located throughout the residence, children were placed in protective custody, and six adults were arrested.

A pharmacy in Blackduck was burglarized and approximately 10,000 pills were taken. A **Paul Bunyan Task Force** agent worked with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and the Superior Wisconsin Police Department to identify the suspects and build a case against them. Following a controlled buy, an additional person was arrested and over 1400 pills were recovered and both suspects confessed to their roles in the burglary. Two task force officers were instrumental in obtaining those confessions. The primary offender admitted to having committed dozens of these burglaries throughout the Midwest.

Agents of the **North Central Task Force** assisted Mille Lacs County investigators with a string of burglaries of residences on the north end of Mille Lacs County and surrounding counties. Taken in these burglaries were guns and electronics. The investigations resulted in numerous arrests and

many stolen guns and other items were recovered. Some of the suspects in these burglaries were members of various gangs in and around the Mille Lacs lake area including the Native Mob.

Pine to Prairie Task Force officers worked a lengthy joint investigation with the Polk County Sheriff's Office. It ended in a consent search of a rural Fosston, Minnesota, residence occupied by a husband and wife. The couple had been involved in multiple sales of marijuana. During the search, the following items were seized: individually wrapped bags of marijuana, hallucinogenic mushrooms, \$1375 in cash, a 9mm semi-automatic handgun and a notebook appearing to document more than \$30,000 in drug sales.

Paul Bunyan Task Force investigated a gang-related drive-by shooting took place on the Leech Lake Reservation. Five people were arrested as a result of this collaboration with the Leech Lake Police Department and Cass County Sheriff's Office. The task force is involved in an ongoing gang investigation addressing violent crime, as well as drug dealing, in the task force area.

An **Anoka-Hennepin Task Force** assisted the U.S. Marshals Office on an arrest warrant in Fridley. Information was developed that methamphetamine might be hidden in the suspects' vehicle. A K-9 sniff alerted on the car and, during the search of the car, 1.5 pounds of meth were located.

The **Boundary Waters Task Force** reports working in conjunction with the BCA and the Anoka-Hennepin Narcotics Task Force investigating a methamphetamine sales ring. A male from the Ely, area was routinely picking up meth from the metro area and transporting it back to the Ely area. A number of targets were identified during this investigation and a number of search warrants were executed in Ely, East Bethel, and Blaine. The male from Ely, MN has been charged with 1st Degree Sales and other charges including felon in possession of firearms. This arrest has disrupted a large supply of methamphetamine being supplied to the Ely area.

In support of their goal to stay on top of new threats and trends, the **Lake Superior Drug & Gang Task Force** undertook a major investigation beginning in August 2011. Calls for service in the downtown Duluth area, specifically in the 100 block of East Superior Street, had skyrocketed as a result of the new synthetic craze. While evidence of bath salts use is still prevalent in the Twin Ports, synthetic marijuana, sold as "incense," was the source for the increased police activity. The business "Last Place on Earth" became the target of this investigation. Undercover purchases of synthetic marijuana were made and probable cause developed to support a search warrant. On 09/21/2011, a search warrant was executed at the "Last Place on Earth" at which time over \$80,000, 31 guns and thousands of dosage units of suspected synthetic marijuana were seized. The evidence in this investigation is still being analyzed and charges are pending.

Central Minnesota Task Force investigators executed a search warrant at a residence in a small town in western Stearns County where law enforcement has received numerous complaints about a family involved with controlled substances, late night thefts and burglaries. The subject was a felon due to previous controlled substance convictions. Investigators located 55 grams of methamphetamine, a stolen firearm, a handgun, blasting caps, hazardous chemicals and \$8287 in US Currency that was admitted drug money. The Bloomington Bomb Squad and Stearns County

Environmental Services assisted with the incident. The subjects were charged with first degree controlled substance crimes and felon in possession.

The **Red River Valley Task Force** gang officer coordinated with Fargo Police Department and North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation to purchase several ounces of cocaine from two Latin King Members. The two suspects are associated with several other Latin King members from our area and are working with them to distribute larger quantities of cocaine. Ultimately a buy/bust for two ounces of cocaine was set up and one of the targets was arrested. The investigation is ongoing in both Moorhead and Fargo on other Latin King members that are associates of these subjects and are also distributing cocaine.

During the 3rd quarter of 2011, the **Lake Superior Task Force** successfully concluded over a year's worth of intense investigation by task force investigators and the ATF. Our case "High Life" and the sub-investigation "Pills in a Box" addressed Opana (oxymorphone), Oxycontin and heroin trafficking in the Twin Ports. Twenty-seven Federal indictments for conspiring to distribute these controlled substances were issued as well as charges ranging from continuing a criminal enterprise, possession with intent to distribute, and using a firearm during/in relation to drug trafficking. On 09-27-2011, nine federal search warrants were executed along with all of the accompanying arrest warrants in this case. This was a large scale "round-up" participated in by numerous federal, state and local agencies.

Members of the **South Central Task Force** teamed with agents from Rice County and the MN BCA, on a large and time consuming case. Several southern Minnesota businesses have been targeted in recent weeks by an organized group of counterfeiters, who coincidentally were also involved in the use and sale of methamphetamine. The case required countless hours conducting surveillance, gathering information, recovering counterfeit currency, and making undercover purchases of counterfeit currency. The case was presented to agents of the US Treasury/Secret Service and they agreed to participate in the case and undercover operations continued for several more weeks. Eventually the case was presented to the US Attorney's Office and it was accepted for federal prosecution. The final day of the investigation went smoothly and several arrests were made with the hope that at least five of the individuals will be indicted federally. Close to \$40,000 in counterfeit currency was either purchased or recovered during the course of this investigation and victim businesses stretching from Iowa to Mankato to the Twin Cities and over to Rochester, have been saved from further damage by this group.

The **Minnesota River Valley Task Force** agents initiated several investigations involving the distribution of prescription medication; the majority of which by college-aged individuals. Agents utilized a female agent from an adjoining task force to complete a purchase of an amount of Morphine tablets from a subject in the area. Another agent of the was able to successfully complete a purchase of an amount of Adderall from one male, an amount of Valium and Xanax from another college student and then more Adderall from a male who had recently been kicked out of college. The task force believes that these types of investigations are only going to increase as the year progresses.

The **Lakes Area Drug Investigation Division (LADID)** completed an investigation into the sale and distribution of meth in Crow Wing County. The suspect was an individual whom LADID had arrested in 2009 for sale of meth. The suspect had just gotten out of prison and was on Intensive Supervised Release with the DOC. LADID was able to make an arrest when the suspect was coming back from the metro area with approx. 12 oz of meth. The investigation continues and could possibly result in the federal prosecution of this and other suspects involved in the case. Despite this arrest, LADID continues to receive constant information about the availability of meth in Brainerd/Crow Wing County. There seems to be several individuals involved bringing large amounts of meth to the area. The task force has been working with agents from North Central MN Drug Task Force attempting to identify suppliers.

The **Northwest Metro Task Force (NWMDTF)** worked on a heroin case using informants to do controlled buys of white heroin. Search warrants were executed and the task force was able to seize a good amount of heroin and charge a person in the case. The timing was important due to the fact the suspect was already going to be sentenced for a separate heroin case. With this new case the suspect was held without bail and is now looking at a more significant sentence.

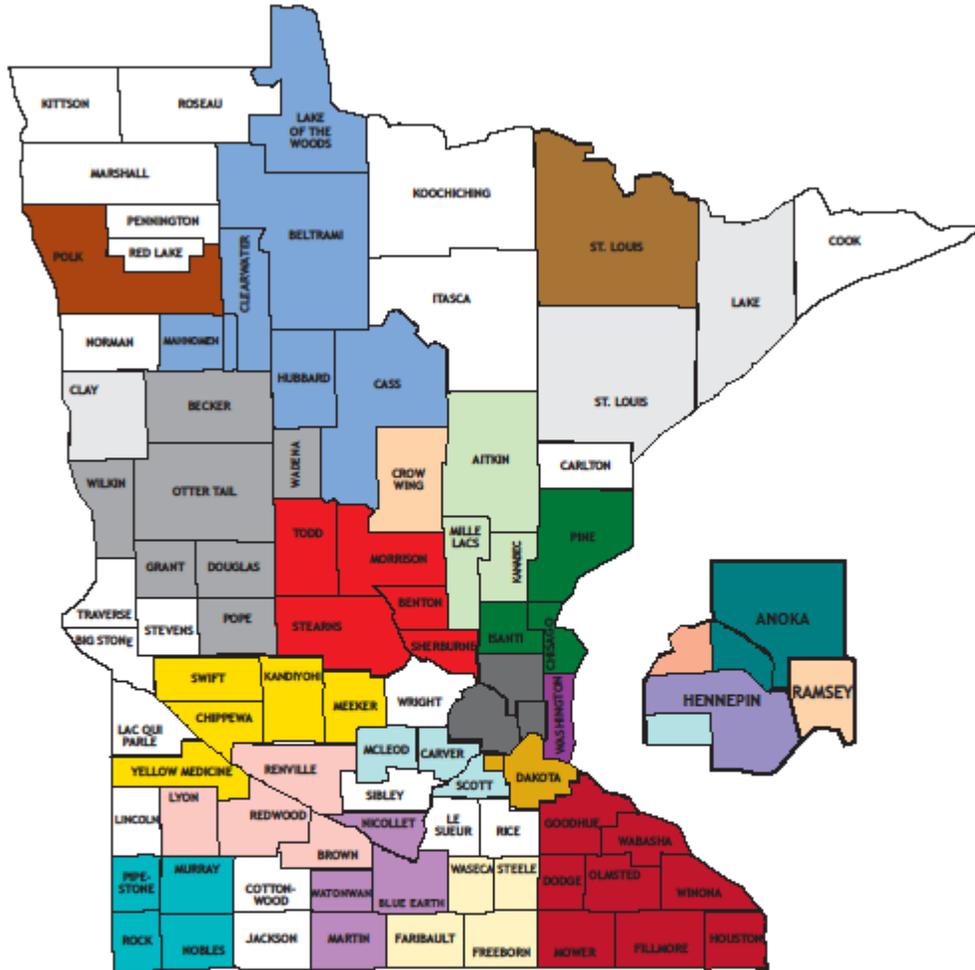
Another case that the NWMDTF worked on alongside Hennepin County Narcotics Unit personnel and Drug and DEA involved a Mexican Drug Trafficking organization that was distributing methamphetamine in the Twin Cities area. In this case suspects were identified and officers executed a search warrant on a vehicle destined for California that was believed to have money in it. During the search \$90,000.00 US currency was recovered that was hidden in the vehicle. Although no drugs were recovered, the loss of the money will negatively impact the traffickers.

Ramsey County Violent Crime Enforcement Team (RCVCET) investigators were working the Hmong New Year event and a gang saturation patrol in St. Paul when a kidnapping from the Maplewood Mall was aired. RCVCET investigations went to the kidnapping location and quickly determined it was an actual forced abduction from the former boyfriend. Investigators gathered suspect information and used technology to locate the suspect vehicle in Oakdale. We were not able to make contact with residents in the home so entry was forced. The suspect, victim and homeowner were all inside. The homeowner stated the suspect would not let her answer the door for police. The suspect was arrested for kidnapping.

CEE-VI Task Force agents were working with what they thought was a low level confidential informant and found out that there were ties to larger narcotics suppliers in the area. The task force found out that significant quantities of drugs, including numerous ounces, and sometimes pounds of methamphetamine, were being transported into and through the area on a weekly basis. The investigation helped to put an end to it. Two defendants are now faced with 1st degree controlled substance charges for drug trafficking in and around the Willmar area.

2012 Drug and Violent Crime Enforcement Teams

Department of Public Safety
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS



TASK FORCES (listed north to south and west to east):

- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Paul Bunyan Narcootics Task Force | East Central Task Force | Brown/Lyon/Redwood Task Force |
| Boundary Waters Drug Task Force | C.E.E. VI Narcootics Task Force | Buffalo Ridge Drug Task Force |
| Lake Superior Drug Task Force | Southwest Metro Drug Task Force | MN River Valley Drug Task Force |
| Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force | Anoka-Hennepin Narcootics Task Force | South Central MN Drug Task Force |
| County shared by: Red River Valley, ND and West Central MN Drug Task Force | Washington County Drug Task Force | Southeast MN Drug Task Force |
| West Central MN Drug Task Force | Northwest Metro Drug Task Force | Areas not in a Task Force |
| Lakes Area Drug Task Force | Hennepin County VCET | |
| Central Minnesota MCIU | Ramsey County VCET | |
| North Central Task Force | Dakota County Drug Task Force (includes portion of Scott Co.) | |

2012 MULTIJURISDICTIONAL TASK FORCE GRANTS

Task Force	Fiscal Agent	2012 Grant	COMMANDER
Anoka-Hennepin TF	Anoka County Sheriff's Office	\$240,000	Lieutenant Bryon Fuerst
❖ B-L-L-R Task Force	New Ulm Police Department	\$164,125	Commander Jody Gladis
Boundary Waters TF	St. Louis County Sheriff's Office	\$96,043	Sergeant Jason Akerson
Buffalo Ridge TF	Worthington Police Department	\$190,675	Commander Troy Appel
❖ CEE-VI TF	Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office	\$177,375	Detective Sgt. Tony Cruze
Central MN VOTF	Central Minnesota Major Crimes Investigation Unit	\$310,000	Lieutenant Jerry Edblad
❖ Dakota County TF	City of Eagan	\$285,546	Sergeant Dan Bianconi
East Central Drug TF	Pine County Sheriff's Office	\$100,000	Investigator Justice Wood
Hennepin County VOTF	Hennepin County Sheriff's Office	\$408,086	Lieutenant Steve Labatt
Lake Superior TF	Duluth Police Department	\$310,813	Lieutenant Steve Stracek
Lakes Area TF	Crow Wing Co Sheriff's Office	\$33,775	Sergeant Joe Meyer
MN River Valley TF	No. Mankato Police Department	\$147,368	Lieutenant Dan Davidson
North Central TF	Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Office	\$60,000	Captain Jason LaSart
Northwest Metro VCET	St. Louis Park Police Dept.	\$66,432	Sergeant Jon Hunt
Paul Bunyan TF	Beltrami County Sheriff's Office	\$296,386	Commander Gary Pederson
Pine To Prairie TF	Crookston Police Department	\$115,088	Sergeant Travis Halvorson
Ramsey County VOTF	Ramsey County Sheriff's Office	\$480,755	Commander Rich Clark
Red River Valley TF	Moorhead Police Department	\$119,375	Lieutenant Brad Penas
South Central TF	Owatonna Police Department	\$153,320	Sergeant Tim Hassing
Southeast MN TF	Olmsted County Sheriff's Office	\$162,373	Captain Mark Erickson
Southwest Metro TF	Shakopee Police Department	\$81,630	Sergeant Mark Williams
Washington County TF	Washington Co Sheriff's Office	\$85,000	Sergeant Andy Ellickson
West Central TF	Douglas County Sheriff's Office	\$153,656	Deputy Scot Umlauf
TOTAL		\$4,259,806	

❖ Funded in whole or part by federal funds from grant award # 2010-DJ-BX-0438

MINNESOTA VIOLENT CRIME COORDINATING COUNCIL (January 2012)

TITLE	NAME	AGENCY
Superintendent	Wade Setter	Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
U.S. Attorney	B. Todd Jones	District of Minnesota
Deputy Attorney General	David Voigt	Office of the Attorney General
Exec. Commander (CHAIR)	Ken Reed	St. Paul Police Department
Chief	Tim Dolan	Minneapolis Police Department
Chief	Mike Goldstein	Plymouth Police Department
Chief (Vice-CHAIR)	Gordon Ramsay	Virginia Police Department
Sheriff	Rich Stanek	Hennepin County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff	Matt Bostrom	Ramsey County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff	Bill Hutton	Washington County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff	Jim Jensen	Dodge County Sheriff's Office
Director	Cari Gerlicher	MN Department of Corrections - Office of Special Investigations
Sr. Assistant County Attorney	Hilary Caligiuri	Hennepin County Attorney's Office
Assistant County Attorney	Benjamin Bejar	Rice County Attorney's Office
Investigator	Chris Benson	White Earth Tribal Police Department
Mr.	Hector Garcia	Chicano Latino Affairs Council
Mr.	Bill Ziegler	Little Earth of United Tribes
Mr.	Melvin Carter	Save Our Sons
LEGAL COUNSEL		
Asst. Attorney General	John Gross	Office of the Attorney General