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Operation Knockdown targets drug trafficking on border

DPS recently conducted Operation Knockdown in Hidalgo, Starr and Brooks counties with the goals of disrupting, denying entry to and recovering loads of narcotics smuggled by drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) into the state.

DPS Aviation developed and implemented an air-asset task force, specifically designed for this type of operation. The task force used DPS helicopters and fixed-wing Texas Military Air National Guard aircraft and was augmented with a mobile DPS SWAT element as ground support. Highway Patrol and Border Patrol agents, already working in steady-state patrol, provided additional resources.

Operation Knockdown was

conducted along known smuggling routes and keyed around air assets in the area. By design, the operation was small to provide instant flexibility and low signature, making it less noticeable to traffickers.

This most-recent operation was designed by DPS Aviation and the Rio Grande Valley Joint Operations Intelligence Center (JOIC) and personnel to disrupt and interdict illegal drug activity. The operation targeted pre-defined areas where there is a high-incident rate of DTO activity. The areas of operation are not limited to a specific stretch of the border, and the operations are sporadic in nature and will continue to target hot spots.

These operations have result-

ed in drug seizures and aborted loads of narcotics, in which the smugglers are attempting to bring drugs across the Rio Grande, but abandon their efforts when they spot the presence of law enforcement. The operations also provide an opportunity for DPS to conduct surveillance of smuggling activity that is applied to future, large-scale operations conducted by the Texas Rangers.

In addition, during these border operations, the Department tests new technology and operating procedures that aid in intelligence sharing and communication between multiple law enforcement and government agencies and contribute to better situational awareness for all operation participants.

Governor appoints new Public Safety commissioner

Gov. Rick Perry has appointed A. Cynthia "Cindy" Leon of Mission to the Texas Public Safety Commission for a term to expire on Jan. 1, 2016.

Leon is a retired regional director for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. She is a life member of the Naval Reserve Association, Navy

League, U.S. Naval Institute and the Reserve Officers Association. She is also a member of the International Women's Forum and Leadership Texas, and past chair of the Dallas-Fort Worth and San Antonio Federal Executive Boards. She served as a captain in the U.S. Navy Reserves.

Leon received a bachelor's de-

gree from Austin College and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She is also a graduate of the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, VA.

Commissioner Leon replaces Tom Clowe of Waco, who had served on the Public Safety Commission since March 2008.

Awards

In October, Sgt. **Derek Prestridge**, Education Training and Research Austin, was awarded the Texas Children's Hero Award by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children--Texas Region.

Prestridge developed the first training program in the nation that trained officers on how to recognize, intervene, and interdict endangered children. Since the development of the course—called Interdiction for the Protection of Children—and the subsequent training for all Highway Patrol Troopers, DPS has documented the recovery of 10 children in Texas by DPS troopers.

Mile Markers

Promotions

Texas Rangers

Terry L. Snyder, Lt., CID San Antonio to Sgt., Rangers Brownsville; **Randy Aguirre**, Agent CID Corpus Christi to Sgt., Rangers Del Rio; **Jeffrey D. Rickel**, Agent, CID Corpus Christi to Sgt., Rangers Kingsville;

Ernesto J. Salinas, Agent, CID Laredo to Sgt., Rangers Laredo; **Eisenhower Upshaw**, Agent, CID Hurst to Sgt., Rangers Garland; **Jason A. Dudley**, Sgt., HP Mineral Wells to Sgt., Rangers Longview.

Regulatory Services

Alicia J. Alexander, Analyst, ICT Dallas to Investigator V, Compliance and Enforcement Dallas.

Highway Patrol

Jay M. Webster, Lt., HP Webster to Capt., HP El Paso; **Armando P. Villescaz**, Sgt., CVE San Angelo to Lt., CVE Waco; **Jeffrey L. Carr**,

Sgt., CVE Palestine to Lt., CVE Tyler; **Daniel A. Martinez**, Cpl. II, CVE Laredo to Sgt., CVE Laredo-Columbia POE.

Office of Inspector General

Michael A. Stanford, Lt., CID Austin to Capt., CID OIG Austin; **Kevin Huggins**, Sgt., HP McKinney to Lt., OIG Dallas; **Robert C. Strickland**, Staff Lt., OIG Tyler to Lt., OIG Dallas;

Christopher W. Pratt, Agent, CID Austin to Lt., OIG Austin; **James P. Lopez**, Sgt., HP Austin to Lt., OIG Austin; **Hoby R. Smith**, Agent, CID Austin to Lt., OIG Austin.

Administration

Eddie King, Prgm. Administrator, Administration Austin to Manager, Administration Austin.

Retirements

Amelia Villarreal Alvarez, Examiner, DL Carrollton, 28 years; **Robert R. Lindley**, Sen. Tr., HP Tyler, 27 years; **Linda L. Carter**, Supv., LES Austin, 24 years; **Raul Doman-tay Centeno**, Tech. II, LES Austin, 11 years; **Catherine May**, Admin. Asst. III, CID Austin, 5 years;

Michael Gary Smith, Sen. Tr., Regulatory Svc. McKinney, 28 years; **Elvira Calvin**, Tech., DL Austin, 27 years; **Elizabeth Zelif**, Supv., Communications San Antonio, 25 years; **Richard Brazzil**, Lt., CID Tyler, 23 years;

Russell Lecklider, Dep. Asst. Director, EMD Austin, 20 years; **Billy Rains Sr.**, Sgt., CID Wichita Falls, 20 years; **Gregorio Benavidez, Jr.**, Admin. Asst. III, DL Laredo, 18 years; **Ken Ballay**, Programmer III, IT Austin, 17 years; **Golden Martin, Jr.**, Inspector IV, HP Riviera, 11 years;

William Masch, Admin. Asst.

IV, DL Austin, 9 years; **Frank May, Jr.**, Manager IV, IT Austin, 6 years; **Ted Maddry**, Prgm. Supv. IV, EMD Austin, 2 years.

Deaths

James Anderson, SES Tr., HP San Antonio (September 1953 – August 1980) died December 16, 2010; **Thomas Wayne Pfluger**, Tr., HP Austin (August 1959 – October 1991) died December 30, 2010; **William (Scooter) Sellers**, Supv., Communications Wichita Falls (October 1973–January 2, 2011) died January 2, 2011; **Robert E. Marx**, Tech. II, Fleet Austin (February 1969 – March 1995) died December 2010; **Weldon Gene Lucas**, ret. Sgt., Texas Rangers Denton (November 1963 – June 1992) died January 15, 2011; **Chester Murrel Reeves**, ret. Tr. III, HP San Marcos (January 1956 – August 1987) died January 16, 2011.



*On the
mend...*

Sgt. David Cramer, CVE Garland, injured in a traffic crash

Tr. **Raymond Sanders**, HP Liberty, injured in a traffic crash

Tr. **Chadrick A. Walker**, HP Cedar Hill, injured in a traffic crash.

Tr. **Dave Walker**, HP El Paso, injured in a traffic crash.

Good news! Tr. **Manuel Gonzales**, HP Weslaco; Tr. **Roberto Madrid-Gonzalez**, HP Brownsville; and Tr. **Andrew Peavy**, CVE Houston; Tr. **Dustin Oliver**, HP Green-ville, have returned to work.