Police crack down on drug deals, usage in Centre County

Task force

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has just begun and they are as busy as ever.

Operated by the Attorney "The drug task force is as busy General's office, the Centre as it's ever been," Leonard said. "I County Drug Task Force consists of police officers from several counties and includes Patton, Ferguson, Bellefonte and Spring townships, in addition to the Pennsylvania State Police.

Randy Feathers, regional direc-Office, said the task force exchanges informants, and his office provides each county with marked money to buy drugs for undercover operations.

Although each has its own jurisdiction, all the police share information when it comes to drugs. Feathers said that's why the $\tilde{n}_{\rm s}$ against drugs in Centre County has been so effective.

Centre County

The main drugs that are present in Centre County are marijuana and cocaine, Feathers said.

State College is not immune to the problem of drugs," he said. "If people stick their head in the sand suspect problems in Centre County, then of

they are just fooling themselves." In fact, State College Police Department Capt. Dana Leonard

said authorities have been working harder than ever to combat drugs in the county.

don't know if there is a greater availability or cheaper price."

He added that drugs are usually transported in bulk from New York or Philadelphia, as was the case in a recent bust.

Five men were charged Dec. 1 tor of the Attorney General's in connection with operating a \$1 million drug ring police said distributed hundreds of ounces of cocaine from Delaware County and Philadelphia to the State College area.

Edwin Rhoades, 38, James Losch, 47, Brian King, 27, Hasan Bradley, 29, and Andre Spangler, 30, were all charged in connection with operating the drug ring, according to a press release from Pennsylvania Attorney General Tom Corbett's office.

State narcotics agents estimate the men were responsible for bringing about \$1 million dollars worth of cocaine into the Centre County area since 2008. Agents the organization and think there isn't any drug distributed about 20 pounds cocaine since the

investigation began in 2009.

Each of the five men faces similar charges, including criminal conspiracy, criminal use of a communication facility and corrupt organization.

Penn State

Penn State Police Deputy Director Tyrone Parham said students are not exempt from the problems of getting involved with, and even dealing, drugs.

'Some students don't even realize that they are drug dealers until they're caught," Parham said. You put 40,000 college-aged kids in an area and it is going to hap-

Parham said students are most often caught with marijuana. They often don't consider themselves to be dealing drugs, but rather "helping out friends," he said.

'In many cases over the years, students and their parents are often surprised that they're being charged with a felony," Parham said. "They don't realize the seriousness of selling drugs to oth-

Many start by selling drugs to their friends and then eventually friends of their friends, Parham said. They eventually branch out and start selling to more people.

Paul R. Spara was charged in concampus to support drug habits. nection with a widespread drug conspiracy aimed to distribute "mass quantities" of marijuana throughout State College, police

Spara, 23, of 161 Gressley Road, Ruffs Dale, and New York resident Jason Remington distributed more than 400 pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$1.2 million, according to court documents.

to three other students, who in turn sold the drugs to other students, police said.

Spara now faces several felony charges and has had his trial postponed three times because of possible plea negotiations, according to court documents.

Ripple effect

Leonard said Centre County residents endure other crimes such as theft and burglary result of drugs in the county.

'People addicted to cocaine resort to crime or drug dealing themselves because they can't afford pay for their own drug addiction," Leonard said. "Many people will sell themselves to keep up with addiction."

Parham said Penn State Police On April 27, Penn State student have seen increases in thefts on

"In the past, we've arrested non-students in Rec Hall and IM Building who were stealing wallets out of gym bags to support their habit," Parham said.

Centre County District Attorney Michael Madeira said students who sell or plan to sell drugs should think twice - a drug charge remains on your record forever.

"A lot of students don't realize Spara then supplied marijuana it's a felony," Madeira said. "A felony never comes off your record. It can affect your graduation and your chances of getting a

> King said most of the drug users he's encountered are people who've had family problems and emotional or mental issues in the

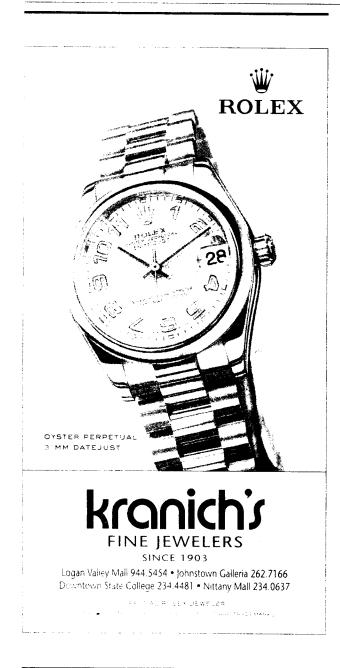
> In the case of the heroin addict, King said the man came from a broken home and had an abusive father.

> Although the man he counseled has since recovered after a few relapses and saved his marriage, his struggle shows the difficulties in conquering an addiction, King said.

"He still struggles, but he's clean now," he said.

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