

Police crack down on drug deals, usage in Centre County

Task force

From Page 1.

has just begun and they are as busy as ever.

Operated by the Attorney General's office, the Centre 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 director of the Attorney General's 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 task force 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 and think there isn't any drug problems in Centre County, then

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.

"The drug task force is as busy as it's ever been," Leonard said. "I 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 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 suspect the organization distributed about 20 pounds of 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 happen."

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 others."

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.

On April 27, Penn State student

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

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.

Spara then supplied marijuana 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 — as a 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 have seen increases in thefts on

campus to support drug habits.

"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 it's a felony," Madeira said. "A felony never comes off your record. It can affect your graduation and your chances of getting a job."

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

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.

To e-mail reporter: ppp5017@psu.edu



ROLEX

OYSTER PERPETUAL
3 MM DATEJUST

kranich's
FINE JEWELERS
SINCE 1903

Logan Valley Mall 944.5454 • Johnstown Galleria 262.7166
Downtown State College 234.4481 • Nittany Mall 234.0637

JIMMY LUNCH

LUNCH LIKE MOM
USED TO MAKE

JIMMY JOHN'S
GOURMET SANDWICHES

434 E. COLLEGE AVE.
814.237.9300

WORLD CLASS CATERING!



START HERE

verizonwireless

Great Gifts all on
America's Best 3G Network.

The multimedia phone
with the brilliant touch

\$299.99 2-yr. price — \$100 mail-in rebate debit card.
Requires a voice plan with email feature.

NEW! DROID EROD
Verizon Wireless 3G DROID
Google Search™, Google Maps™ and
thousands of Android Market™ apps

\$99.99

\$199.99 2-yr. price — \$100 mail-in rebate debit card.
Requires a voice plan with email feature.

A touch screen gem with
slide-out keyboard

\$79.99

\$179.99 2-yr. price — \$100 mail-in rebate debit card.
Requires a Nationwide
Calling Plan with data pak \$9.99 or higher.

Wi-Fi capable. Ultraresponsive. Tons of apps.

\$179.99

\$279.99 2-yr. price — \$100 mail-in rebate debit card.
Free phone must be of equal or lesser value. Requires
a voice plan with email feature per smartphone.

All phones and devices require new 2-yr. activation. While supplies last.

The Best Destination **For Holiday Gifts.**

Get America's Largest

Call 1.877.2BUY.VZW verizonwireless.com/holiday Visit any Communications Store

Activation fee/line: \$35 (\$25 for secondary Family SharePlan™ lines w/ 2-yr. Agmts).
IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION: Subject to Customer Agmt., Calling Plan, rebate form & credit approval. Up to \$175 early termination fee/line (\$350 for advanced devices) & other charges. Device capabilities: Add'l charges & conditions apply. Offers & coverage, varying by service, not available everywhere. While supplies last. Shipping charges may apply. Rebate debit card takes up to 6 weeks & expires in 12 months. All company names, trademarks, logos and copyrights not the property of Verizon Wireless are the property of their respective owners. DROID is a trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd. and its related companies. Used under license. Best 3G network based on having the nation's largest and most reliable 3G network. Google, Google Search, Google Maps™ and Android Market are trademarks of Google, Inc. © 2009 Verizon Wireless. CPT