



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Largest Meth Bust In State History ***Forty Individuals Indicted, Rounded up in Upstate***

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster, along with Greenville County Sheriff Steve Loftis, Pickens County Sheriff David Stone, S.C. Adjutant General Stan Spears, and a host of other state and local law enforcement officials from across the Upstate, today announced the largest Methamphetamine bust and drug dealer roundup in the state's history.

Forty (40) defendants involved in the Upstate drug ring were indicted by the state grand jury on December 13, 2005. The indictments were sealed while the investigation led authorities through a complex web of top-level drug dealers and their associates. The indictments were unsealed on Friday, January 19, 2006.

On Sunday, January 22, 2006, state and local law enforcement officials conducted surprise raids at locations across the Upstate and began taking the indicted defendants into custody. The defendants will be prosecuted by the office of the Attorney General Henry McMaster.

The drug ring concentrated mainly on Meth "Ice", which is a pure, potent, and professionally manufactured form of Methamphetamine. "Ice" is produced in superlabs, commonly at a rate of ten (10) pounds in a twenty-four (24) hour period. "Ice" is a very dangerous form of Meth that is often produced in foreign countries such as Mexico, smuggled into the United States, and sold at tremendous profit.

The indictments cover a total of ninety-two (92) separate charges against the forty (40) defendants. If convicted, the group faces in excess of two thousand three hundred thirty-six (2,336) years in prison. The possible fines allowable by law on all charges could total as high as \$11,613,500. For a list of individuals indicted and alleged offenses, please see links below.

The indictments allege that during the period January 2005 to December 2005, law enforcement officials from as many as ten (10) agencies; state, local and federal, seized in excess of six hundred six (606) ounces (37.88 lbs.) of Meth "Ice", twenty-four (24) ounces of Cocaine, two hundred ninety (290) tablets of Ecstasy, and eight hundred twenty (820) pounds of marijuana in a number of busts throughout the upstate.

Law enforcement also seized \$213,750 in cash, \$38,896 in assets that have been sold, and \$22,000 in assets that are currently being used in the war on Meth. Items seized and now being utilized by law

enforcement include: a motorcycle, a GMC Yukon, a gas powered generator, an enclosed trailer, a car hauler, and several televisions.

“This is the biggest, most significant Meth bust in our state’s history, but it is only a single battle in a widening war against this dangerous drug,” said McMaster. “This record-setting bust represents a tremendous effort between numerous law enforcement agencies. The level of cooperation and collaboration at all levels was extraordinary, and has resulted in a major victory in our war on Meth.”

“Meth is the single largest and fastest growing drug threat facing our state,” added McMaster.

No trial dates for any of the defendants have been set.

McMaster stressed that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they are proven guilty in a court of law.

Agencies participating in this case include: the State Law Enforcement Division, the Greenville County Sheriff’s Office, the Pickens County Sheriff’s Office, the Anderson County Sheriff’s Office, the Oconee County Sheriff’s Office, the Laurens County Sheriff’s Office, the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office, the Easley Police Department, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Governor’s Counter Drug Task Force / S.C. National Guard.

To view defendant mug shots online:

<http://www.scttorneygeneral.com/newsroom/mugshots>

For defendant information online:

<http://www.scttorneygeneral.com/newsroom/pdf/icecreamdefendants.pdf>

For an online list of offenses and penalties associated with this case:

<http://www.scttorneygeneral.com/newsroom/pdf/icecreampenalties.pdf>

To view the official indictments online:

<http://www.scttorneygeneral.com/newsroom/pdf/icecreamindictment.pdf>

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