

Alaska State Troopers

Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit



2002 Drug Report



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Introduction

The Alaska State Troopers Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit, in authoring this publication, has endeavored to represent the drug situation in Alaska in a manner that provides the broadest possible picture of the true situation.

There are several agencies that conduct drug investigations in Alaska. While some agencies have a less formal relationship, most work closely with the Alaska State Troopers. In order to properly represent the true drug situation in Alaska, statistics from agencies other than those that participate in Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit are included in this report. Information provided by all sources should be considered when attempting to measure how drugs are impacting the citizens of this state.

We believe that all of this material is vital when analyzing the needs of the state in the arena of drug enforcement.



Our Mission

Statewide Drug Enforcement

The Alaska State Troopers, Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit (SDEU) provides a leadership role in coordinating law enforcement's efforts to reduce the availability of controlled substances and alcohol throughout Alaska. SDEU recognizes that a successful drug and alcohol program depends upon a unified effort blending traditional law enforcement techniques with demand reduction programs that address educational, social, and community concerns.

SDEU's mission is to:

- /// Interdict and seize controlled substances and alcohol that are illegally distributed throughout Alaska.
- /// Identify and arrest distributors of controlled substances and alcohol.
- /// Provide training and investigative support to criminal justice agencies.
- /// Support and participate in public education programs.

Staffing and Support

Using a combination of federal and state funding, SDEU consisted of eighteen (18) State Trooper investigators and seven (7) civilian clerical personnel for the majority of 2002. SDEU recognizes that because of Alaska's geographical vastness and ethnic diversity, no single law enforcement agency is capable of handling the drug and alcohol problems alone. SDEU encourages cooperative efforts between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and has taken a leadership role in fostering and developing many of these cooperative arrangements through multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency efforts. The SDEU headquarters office in Anchorage supports five (5) investigative teams throughout the state. These teams are broken down by region as follows:

Alaska Interdiction Task Force

Fairbanks Areawide Narcotics Team

Mat-Su Drug Narcotics Enforcement Team

Southeast Alaska Narcotics Enforcement Team

Western Alaska Alcohol and Narcotics Team

The Alaska National Guard Counter Drug Support Program (CDSP) provides additional support in several SDEU units. They provide operational resources, which include, but are not limited to manpower, equipment, and logistical support to federal, state, and local law enforcement throughout Alaska. Financed under a special congressional appropriation, there is no cost to the state of Alaska for the CDSP. This program contributes numerous resources not normally available to law enforcement agencies for assistance specific to drug investigations.

SDEU participates with and receives assistance from several investigative agencies involved in drug enforcement. These agencies include the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), U.S. Customs, as well as other state and local agencies.

Nature of the Drug Problem

Members of Alaska's law enforcement community and others who are part of Alaska's criminal justice system have long known that the greatest contributing factor to violent crimes, including domestic violence and sexual assault, is drug and alcohol abuse. It is also widely recognized that many of the accidental deaths that occur in Alaska are related to alcohol use. This is especially true in the western regions of the state.

While there is no question that many aspects of the drug and alcohol problem are unique to Alaska, SDEU strives to provide for a continuing and coordinated effort that not only meets the needs of Alaska, but is also dovetailed with the National Drug Control Strategy. The Strategy underscores the social and economic costs to society and was developed to provide general guidance and a framework for federal, state, and local agencies in developing a counter drug effort. The Strategy's established goals are:

- Educate and enable America's youth to reject illegal drugs as well as alcohol and tobacco.
- Increase the safety of America's citizens by substantially reducing drug-related crime and violence.
- Reduce health and social costs to the public of illegal drug use.
- Shield America's air, land and sea frontiers from the drug threat.
- Break foreign and domestic drug sources of supply.

The National Institute of Justice's Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program tracks trends in the prevalence and type of drug use among booked arrestees in urban areas. This data plays an important role in assembling the national picture of drug abuse in the arrestee population and has been a central component in studying the links between drug use and crime.

According to the research conducted by ADAM in Anchorage during 2001, several very serious trends are clearly visible.

Among the 571 male arrestees screened, only 12 percent were between 15 and 20 years of age. Over 41 percent were 36 years of age or older. These age brackets do not seem to dovetail with the normal expectations since such a large percent of those arrested are over 36 years of age. When arrested, over 19 percent of the 571 arrestees tested positive for cocaine. Over 38 percent tested positive for marijuana.

A total of 122 female arrestees were surveyed. Among those female arrestees, only 15.6 percent were between 15 and 20 years of age. Just slightly over 40 percent were 36 years of age or older. Cocaine was detected among 22.8 percent of the female arrestees while marijuana was present in 30.7 percent of the arrestees.

The primary reason that these persons were arrested is not indicated in the ADAM report, but a strong inference can certainly be made that among arrestees, the use of drugs is prevalent.

While there are no ADAM type statistics on hand to indicate drug or alcohol use among arrestees in the more rural areas of Alaska, there is certainly strong evidence that alcohol is a very large contributor to the reasons that rural citizens are arrested.

The State Medical Examiners office reports that in calendar year 2002, their office reviewed 1,072 deaths. Out of that number, they conducted toxicology tests on 644 bodies. Drugs were found to be present in 184 cases. Alcohol was present in 122 cases. A combination of drugs and alcohol was present on 27 occasions.



Drugs of Choice

Alcohol, cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana have been identified as the primary substances of abuse and are the focus of most law enforcement efforts. Methamphetamine use and manufacturing has increased significantly. Other drugs such as pharmaceuticals or prescription drugs, LSD, Ecstasy and other designer and/or “club” drugs were also cause for concern in 2002.

Alcohol

Alaska’s criminal justice professionals recognize that alcohol is the primary substance of abuse in Alaska and is the leading cause of violence and accidental death, especially in rural areas. Currently, more than 120 communities have voted in favor of local option statutes prohibiting the sale, importation, and/or possession of alcohol. Because alcohol remains legal in many areas of Alaska, illegal bootlegging activities have taken hold in the local option communities. Alcohol is easily transported to the villages via the U.S. Postal Service, local air carriers, private aircraft and express mailing services. Bootlegging alcohol and has become a very lucrative business in the state of Alaska.

The Alaska State Troopers applied for and received federal funding for five investigators whose function is focused on alcohol issues. Two of the investigators are subordinate to SDEU, dedicating 100% of their time to alcohol investigations. The other three positions are uniformed officers assigned to "C" Detachment with half of their time dedicated to illegal alcohol investigations and the other half dedicated to community policing efforts in an attempt to reduce alcohol use and abuse in the rural communities.

The economics of the illegal sales of alcohol is staggering. A bootlegger can purchase alcohol legally at \$10 for a 750-milliliter bottle in an urban liquor store. The same bottle of alcohol in Bethel, Kotzebue or Barrow may sell for \$50. In the more remote communities, alcohol can sell for as much as \$150 per bottle. The initial purchase for the bootlegger involves a minimal cash investment and a maximum cash return. A dollar-for-dollar comparison of alcohol and drugs purchased in Anchorage and then sold in many Alaskan villages breaks down as follows:

Substance	Investment	Return
Cocaine	\$1.00	\$1.50
Marijuana	\$1.00	\$4.00
Alcohol	\$1.00	\$15.00



Cocaine

Cocaine continues to be a lucrative drug for sale and use in Alaska. Cocaine is readily available in most areas of the state and is seen with great frequency in powder form and crack cocaine in the major urban areas such as Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Cocaine is brought into Alaska concealed on passengers or in luggage through ports of entry such as the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

The cocaine brought into Alaska is typically packaged in kilogram quantities and later broken down by dealers to gram quantities for retail sale. In powder form, it is normally sold in gram quantities for \$100-150 and its primary method of ingestion is by snorting.

Crack dealers use a process involving powder cocaine, water, baking soda and heat to produce crack cocaine, which is then sold in small rocks for \$20. The primary method of use for crack is by smoking.



Marijuana

Marijuana is available throughout the state and is viewed as a gateway drug to other drugs for young adults and teenagers. Demand for Alaskan-grown marijuana continues to be high as a result of its exceptional tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content. Because Alaskan produced marijuana is extremely high quality; Alaska is considered a marijuana exporting state.

Extremely sophisticated indoor growing operations have been identified primarily in the Mat-Su region. It is not unusual for sites to be located in homes with underground rooms specifically designed for the cultivation of marijuana. These rooms are often equipped with surveillance cameras and state-of-the-art timers controlling temperature, lighting, water, humidity and air purifiers.

In some parts of the state, the local economy is directly affected by the influx of money from illegally produced marijuana. Proceeds from marijuana production are used for a multitude of purchases including fuel, grow equipment/supplies, utilities, vehicles, ATV's and building materials.



Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine use and manufacturing continues to be on the rise throughout the United States including Alaska. The manufacture and distribution of meth has reached alarming proportions. Methamphetamine, also known as meth, speed, crank, crystal and ice, produces an increase in energy and alertness, and a decrease in appetite. The effects, which also include an intense rush, can last up to 12 hours. It can be smoked, snorted, injected, or taken orally. The most frequent method of use is injection.

The DEA continues to conduct training in Alaska so that police officers will have the skills, knowledge, and tools to safely investigate suspected clandestine laboratories. There is now a sizable cadre of trained officers across the state. These officers are available to assist in the eradication of clandestine laboratories. They consist of federal, state, and local officers. In order to stay compliant with OSHA regulations, these members require annual re-certification as well as constant replacement of one time use equipment.

Additionally, DEA has been extremely helpful in assisting in the cost of gross clean-up at clandestine lab sites. This requires a certified clean-up company to respond to the scene of each location, containerize larger items as well as the containers of chemical. These containers are then transported to a location for safe long-term storage and/or destruction.

A total of 50 clandestine laboratories were discovered in Alaska in 2000. As a result of aggressive training and subsequent enforcement effort, the number of labs discovered in 2001 dropped to 21. Statistics show that the number is again on the rise. In 2002, a total of 32 clandestine laboratories were discovered in Alaska.

Methamphetamine laboratories are being operated increasingly in single and multi-family residences in many neighborhoods. In addition to meth labs producing illegal, often deadly drugs, the clandestine nature of the manufacturing process and the presence of ignitable, corrosive, reactive, and toxic chemicals at the sites, have resulted in explosions, fires, toxic fumes, and irreparable damage to human health and to the environment. On several occasions in 2002, labs were also discovered in hotel/motel rooms.

Some of the commonly available items used in the manufacturing of meth include, Ephedrine or pseudoephedrine (found in cold/allergy tablets), lithium batteries, starter fluid, rock/table salt, matchbooks, coffee filters, acetone, aluminum foil and assorted kitchen glassware.

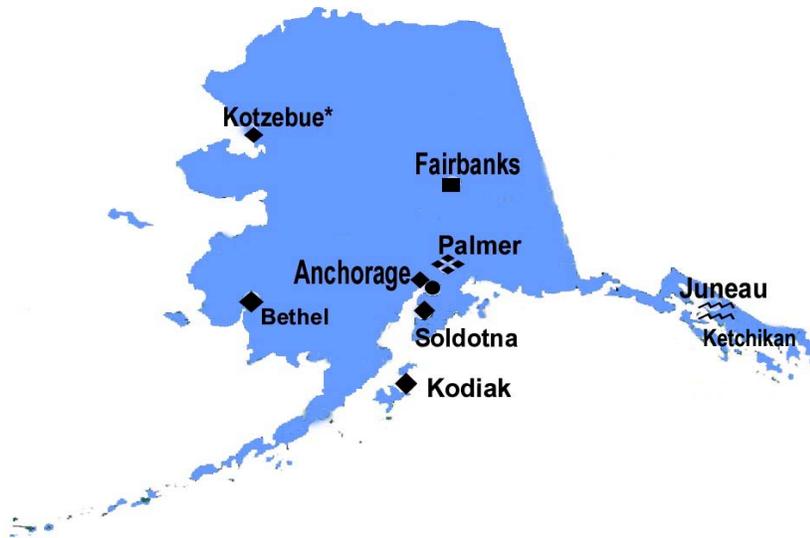
The methamphetamine problem in Alaska has certain peculiarities depending upon the region of the state in which the problem is located. The Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai Peninsula, and Fairbanks areas have a significant problem with clandestine labs that produce methamphetamine that is consumed in the local area. Southeast Alaska, specifically Ketchikan and Juneau, tend to have relatively large amounts of methamphetamine arrive already in a processed and usable form. The same tends to be true for coastal commercial fishery related communities.





Statewide Drug Enforcement - Unit Overviews

The five teams that comprise the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit are spread throughout the state. Each team works hand-in-hand with the local law enforcement agencies and, in most locations, with the federal law enforcement agencies. The five teams are depicted on this map.



Alaska Interdiction Task Force

The importance of the narcotics interdiction effort at key locations is constantly being reaffirmed. Previously known as the Anchorage Airport Detail, the Alaska Interdiction Task Force (AITF) has continued its success in making large seizures of cash, cocaine, crack, and other controlled substances.

The AITF is responsible for investigations that involve drug trafficking at various ports of entry to include passengers and luggage arriving at airport terminals, as well as packages and cargo shipped through parcel facilities and commercial cargo carriers. They are based in Anchorage, since most passengers and packages arrive at facilities located at, or near the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

Cocaine primarily comes into Alaska through the Anchorage Airport from various source cities in the lower 48 states. Various methods are used to transport cocaine, such as concealing it in carry-on luggage, secured underneath clothing, or hidden in shoes, just to name a few. It is also imported and distributed through parcel express companies and the U.S. Postal Service.

In addition to the cocaine seizures, the AITF seized significant amounts of U.S. currency as it was leaving Alaska through the airport. The cash is commonly found to be the proceeds of drug trafficking.

Based on the amount of cocaine detected and interdicted in the last several years in Anchorage, there are clear indications that the illegal possession, sale, and use of cocaine in Alaska are a significant problem. There are organizations with nationwide connections moving very large quantities of cocaine and drug related monies across the country and state.



Mat-Su Drug Enforcement Team

The Mat-Su Drug Enforcement Team focuses on drug investigations within the Matanuska-Susitna region to include Palmer, Wasilla, Talkeetna, Glennallen, Valdez, and Cordova. The Team is comprised of one AST sergeant, two AST investigators, one officer from the Palmer Police Department, one officer from the Wasilla Police Department, and three individuals from CDSP.

This team's primary enforcement duties are marijuana cultivation, with more than 80% of their work directly related to marijuana grows. The Mat-Su region comprises the bulk of marijuana related seizures throughout Alaska and has long been recognized as the primary area of marijuana cultivation and distribution in the State.

The Mat-Su Drug Team continued its aggressive marijuana grow eradication efforts during 2002, eradicating more than 50 marijuana grows and seizing over 3500 plants. Marijuana grows are not just large city or bedroom community problems.

The production of methamphetamine in illegal clandestine laboratories was also a significant problem across the Mat-Su area. While the number of laboratories discovered did not rise to the levels feared, a total of 6 labs were discovered and eradicated. Sources indicate that the problem of meth use and manufacturing is a steadily growing problem in the Mat-Su area. The Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit is constantly analyzing the situation and adjusting resources as needed to maintain an aggressive enforcement effort.

The Mat-Su Drug Enforcement Team works closely with the local police departments and the uniformed patrol section of the Alaska State Troopers to educate, train, and support their efforts related to drug enforcement. The unit is also working closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration concerning prescription drug sales and distribution.

Undercover operations in the Mat-Su Valley are increasing as the team looks towards addressing drug related problems in addition to marijuana grows.

Additionally, the Mat-Su Drug Team has utilized funds provided by the Alcohol Beverage Control Board in conducting alcohol sales compliance checks. These efforts are conducted at liquor package stores in order to detect whether the facilities are selling alcohol to underage customers.



Fairbanks Areawide Narcotics Team

The primary area of responsibility for the Fairbanks Areawide Narcotics Team is interior Alaska, which includes Fairbanks and the surrounding area, north to Barrow, and east to the Canadian border. This team is made up of one AST sergeant, two AST investigators, and a Fairbanks Police Department investigator. Their focus varies from the identification and investigation of street level dealers of crack cocaine to the investigation of large distributors of powder cocaine. Of significant concern in the Fairbanks area is the continuing threat of manufacturing, use, and distribution of methamphetamine. Clandestine methamphetamine laboratories are prevalent in the Fairbanks area and are being operated increasingly in or near single and multi-family homes, where public health and safety is at an extremely high risk.

The year 2002 brought a variety of accomplishments to the Fairbanks team, including the eradication of 15 methamphetamine labs and 25 marijuana grows.

Cases of significance during 2002 included a case in January where two kilos of cocaine were seized from an individual arriving at the Fairbanks International Airport. The cocaine was concealed in a hidden compartment within a suitcase.

In yet another January case, the unit seized two kilos of cocaine from another person arriving at the Fairbanks Airport. Both of these investigations were conducted in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Administration.

In March 2002, an undercover trooper purchased 99 methadone tablets from a suspect who reportedly was supplying a large number of pharmaceutical type drugs to local college-age youth.

In June 2002, the Fairbanks Drug team made contact with suspects at a local motel. The suspects were found to be in possession of an ounce of meth and \$6,500 in cash. The subjects had apparently been selling the meth from the room after receiving a shipment of drugs.

Also in June 2002, a very large meth laboratory was discovered at a residence in Fairbanks. It is one of the largest yet discovered in Alaska. The subject associated with the lab admitted that he had been manufacturing meth for more than 19 years.

Numerous undercover operations were conducted in Fairbanks in 2002. A total of 137 persons had criminal charges referred to prosecutor's offices for drug related matters during this reporting period.



Southeast Alaska Narcotics Enforcement Team

The primary responsibility for drug enforcement in southeast Alaska lies with the Southeast Alaska Narcotics Enforcement Team. This team is composed of one AST sergeant and two Juneau Police Department officers, who work closely with officers from the Ketchikan, Sitka, Wrangell, Yakutat, Craig, Haines, Skagway, Hoonah and Petersburg Police Departments. The team's focus ranges from street level dealers to major offenders. Some of the investigative methods used by this team include interdiction activities and undercover operations. This program works hand-in-hand with the **SouthEast Alaska Cities Against Drugs (SEACAD)** project that is oversights by the Sitka Police Department.

Of particular note in Southeast Alaska is the quick rise in the availability, sales, possession, and use of methamphetamine. It appears that most of the substance is introduced into the region in a powder form, having been manufactured at another location.

Highlights for 2002 include an investigation in January where it was discovered that a Juneau resident had been responsible for very large shipments of methamphetamine into that city, upwards of five pounds in a five- month period.

In February, an investigation started by the uniformed patrol section of the Alaska State Troopers in Ketchikan led to the seizure of 42 pounds of marijuana (photo below) being smuggled from British Columbia into Alaska via float plane. One Canadian citizen was arrested in this case.

In March, a pound of methamphetamine was seized at the Ketchikan Airport as two travelers arrived from California. Also in March, 434 grams of methamphetamine (approx. one pound) was seized from a courier at the Juneau Airport.

In August, the unit assisted the Sitka Police department in a methamphetamine investigation. Search warrants were served on a fishing vessel (photo below) and a mobile home. Evidence of a methamphetamine lab was found on the fishing vessel. Also 24 marijuana plants, 6 firearms, and \$4,000 in cash were seized.

Late in the year, the Ketchikan team worked with DEA to investigate a group of methamphetamine dealers. The group had been moving large amounts of methamphetamine to Ketchikan, Craig, and other communities in southeast Alaska. Several members of that group have been arrested.



Western Alaska Alcohol and Narcotics Team (WAANT)

This team's area of responsibility is Alaska's west coast, to include Kotzebue, Nome, Bethel, Kodiak, Dillingham, the Aleutian Chain, and the Kenai Peninsula. For most of 2002, the WAANT team consisted of one AST sergeant and two AST investigators in Anchorage; one AST investigator and one officer from Soldotna Police Department in Soldotna; one AST investigator and one officer from Bethel Police Department in Bethel; one AST investigator in Kodiak, working with investigators from Kodiak Police Department; and one officer from Kotzebue Police Department assigned to the Kotzebue WAANT office.

One of the positions in Bethel and one in Anchorage are dedicated specifically to alcohol interdiction and investigations.

Due to the vast number of local option communities in western Alaska, a large portion of this team's principal focus is on alcohol enforcement. They target smugglers and bootleggers through undercover operations and interdictions.

Two common methods of importing alcohol and illegal drugs into rural communities are via the U.S. Postal system and local airlines. Alcohol shipped legally to regional hubs such as Nome, Bethel, and Kotzebue is then distributed to local option communities that have banned alcohol or have limited the possession of alcohol under the local option laws of Alaska.

Because much of the alcohol and drugs being sold illegally in Alaska are shipped through the U.S. mail, the U.S. Postal Inspectors Service conducts interdictions with direct support from CDSP. These efforts consist mainly of CDSP members monitoring packages en route to outlying villages and communities through the Anchorage postal hub facility. Suspicious packages are brought to the attention of the Postal Inspectors, who then decide how best to investigate the shipment.

The investigations of many of these seizures are coordinated through AST and/or other local law enforcement entities. The Postal Inspectors office relies heavily on support from the SDEU. This support includes resources like scent detection canines, intelligence information and follow-up efforts. Not only do these resources assist in the seizure, they also help successfully investigate and prosecute those involved in alcohol bootlegging and drug trafficking.

In other WAANT areas of responsibility, the team has conducted long term undercover operations in Kodiak that resulted in the arrest of cocaine dealers; facilitated undercover operations in Seward that resulted in a significant cocaine dealer being arrested; and eradicated 23 marijuana grow operations in Kenai Peninsula communities.



ALASKA STATE TROOPERS STATEWIDE DRUG ENFORCEMENT UNIT 2002 STATISTICS

Recognizing that not all drug activity in the state of Alaska is reported to the Alaska State Troopers, the following statistics are an accumulation of the activities and seizures involving the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit, AST Detachments, and the local police departments that participate in the program. These numbers do not include the Anchorage Police Department, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, or U.S. Customs.

TOTAL CASES	2001	2002
Drug / Alcohol Cases	3,115	4006

ARRESTS BY ACTIVITY	2001	2002
Possession	265	612
Distribution / Sell	135	262
Transportation	173	254
Marijuana Cultivation	148	135
Meth Manufacturing	23	47
TOTAL ARRESTS	759	1263

SUBSTANCES SEIZED	2001	2002
Cocaine - powder (pounds)	59.91	17.83
Cocaine - crack (pounds)	2.2	5.12
Marijuana Plants	8,821*	6641
Marijuana (processed-pounds)	87.49	141.73
Methamphetamine (pounds)	1.74	2.69
Ecstasy-MDMA (tablets)	1,788	128
Alcohol (gallons)	429.75	711.76
Heroin (pounds)	.08	.02
LSD (dosage units)	10	0
Mushrooms (pounds)	.45	6.23



DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has added several Special Agents to Alaska in the last few years. Two of these positions are located in Fairbanks and work hand-in-hand with the Alaska State Troopers Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit, investigating a wide variety of drug related crimes.

DEA in Anchorage is deeply involved in working with all state and local drug units to enhance and facilitate investigations of major offenders. They are the host agency for the Alaska Interdiction Task Force, a joint effort involving DEA, AST, Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport Police, Anchorage Police Department, Postal Inspectors, CDSF, and several other agencies as needed.

As indicated in their statistics, DEA has seized large amounts of cocaine, mostly as a result of information developed about shipments of the substance en route to Alaska. This year, several DEA units around the country have intercepted over 116 pounds of cocaine that were destined for Alaska. Between the Alaska Interdiction Task Force, the DEA in Alaska, and DEA at other locations, over 340 pounds of cocaine were seized this year en route to or arriving in Anchorage. That amount of cocaine has a potential street value of \$15.8 million dollars.

DEA continued to furnish training to state and local officers on topics related to clandestine methamphetamine laboratories. Like last year, DEA bore the cost of several troopers and officers attending meth lab related training at the DEA's training facility in Quantico, Virginia.

DEA funded the 2-week Basic Narcotic Investigator School in 2002, which over 45 state and local officer attended. DEA also funded Operation Jetway training in Alaska in 2002 where approximately 35 officers were trained.

DEA has provided the funds for members of the Alaska Interdiction Task Force to travel for training in Washington, D.C., and they have also facilitated participation of more troopers in a Drug Unit Commanders Academy held in Quantico, Virginia.

DEA continues to facilitate forfeiture proceedings related to assets and funds seized as a result of criminal investigations into drug trafficking. This effort allows state and local law enforcement agencies to receive a portion of the assets seized, which in turn funds additional criminal investigations.

The Drug Enforcement Administration continues to develop a strong role in the overall drug enforcement effort in Alaska.

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION 2002 STATISTICS

CASES / ARRESTS	Anchorage	Fairbanks
Arrested/Charged	52	10

SUBSTANCES SEIZED	Anchorage	Fairbanks
Cocaine/Crack (pounds)	190.89	.12 *
Marijuana Plants	11	244
Marijuana (processed-pounds)	1.62	7.80
Methamphetamine (pounds)	7.46	1.24
Ecstasy-MDMA (pounds)	2.02	0
Heroin (pounds)	.36	0

* A total of 11.83 pounds of cocaine were seized in the course of joint investigation involving DEA and the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit. For purposes of this report those statistics are reported under the Statewide Drug Enforcement section.





U.S. POSTAL INSPECTORS

With assistance from the Alaska National Guard Counter Drug Support Program, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service frequently identifies packages of drugs and alcohol transiting about Alaska through the U.S. Postal Service. SDEU maintains an excellent symbiotic relationship with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Once these packages have been identified, the Postal Inspectors coordinate with SDEU to facilitate an investigation into the illegal nature of the shipment. Often this effort consists of direct involvement by an investigator of the unit, but on occasion, it is simply coordinated between local law enforcement agencies and the Postal Inspectors to insure that proper follow-up investigations occur.

The Postal Inspectors have been a tremendous ally in identifying and seizing illegal shipments of alcohol through the postal facilities. Postal Inspectors remain a major component in the on-going effort to curb the illegal distribution of alcohol in local option communities.

The Postal Inspectors also actively seek out shipments of illegal drugs through their system and continue to enjoy very good success in that effort. SDEU has a long history of supplying scent detection canine support to the Postal Inspectors, in addition to the investigative support that is routinely provided.

In analyzing the seizure statistics provided by the U.S. Postal Inspectors, it is important to consider that some of their statistics may have been duplicated or co-mingled with the seizures of other investigative units.

SUBSTANCES SEIZED	2001	2002
Cocaine/Crack (pounds)	1.86	7.92
Marijuana (processed-pounds)	19.67	17.89
Methamphetamine (pounds)	.42	.30
Ecstasy-MDMA (tablets)	73	not reported
Alcohol (gallons)	162.97	75.98
Heroin (pounds)	.12	0
LSD (dosage unit)	20 ml	not reported
Mushrooms (pounds)	.24	.08
Misc. pills	-	881



ANCHORAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Anchorage Police Department (APD) reports another eventful year. The APD Metro unit, the Patrol Division and the Safe Streets Task Force had a total of 2,120 calls for service in 2002. Of those calls, 1222 reports were written, 777 people were arrested and 852 drug charges were filed. There were 6 meth labs seized and dismantled and 2,453 marijuana plants were seized from 48 marijuana grows.

The calendar year 2002 proved to be a rebuilding year for APD Metro. Four of the five detectives assigned to APD Metro transferred into the unit in late 2001. The lack of experience didn't slow the unit down from making numerous cases while also assisting with a major offender investigation spearheaded by the FBI and DEA. During 2002, Metro made 21 arrests, seized two stolen firearms, served 16 search warrants and seized approximately \$20,000 in cash.

SUBSTANCES SEIZED	2001	2002
Cocaine/Crack (pounds)	28	30
Marijuana Plants	307	2,453
Marijuana (processed-pounds)	65.1	72
Methamphetamine (pounds)	1.26	.64
Ecstasy-MDMA (tablets)	414	346
Heroin (pounds)	.09	.13
LSD (dosage unit)	128.73	14.95
Opium (pounds)	.05	1.8

Highlights for 2002

One of the greatest highlights for 2002 was the culmination of Operation Arctic Heat. This case had its roots in numerous seizures made at the Anchorage International Airport. The case gained specific attention when other agencies began to realize that very large amounts of cocaine were being detected and seized across the Anchorage area. Following a meeting involving all the concerned agencies, the FBI and DEA took the lead in forming a “Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF)” to thoroughly investigate the activities of this particular group.

The FBI and DEA began the investigation in November 2000 as a Racketeering Enterprise Investigation to target Dominican drug trafficking organization operating in Alaska. The group of traffickers was known as the Zapata/Crucey/Sosa organization.

The investigation determined that this organization was being supplied by major Mexican drug trafficking organizations in the Los Angeles area. The Dominican organization was also distributing drugs to New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, as well as Anchorage, principally by couriers traveling on commercial airlines, concealment in vehicles driven or shipped to Alaska and by commercial shipments on carriers such as Federal Express.

On November 7, 2002, the investigation was “taken-down” as twenty-six individuals were arrested. Twenty-five of these suspects were in Anchorage; one was in New York. Twelve search warrants were executed resulting in the seizure of \$218,121 in cash. Eleven defendants remain at large, as of February 15, 2003. Most of them are residing in the Dominican Republic. During the investigation, a total of fifty-two defendants were charged and forty-one were arrested.

As a result of this investigation, \$1.6 million in cash was seized from the drug traffickers, as were 166 kilos (365 pounds) of cocaine.

Some examples of the seizures were:

- November 2001, \$340,000 cash seized at Anchorage Airport en route to the Dominican Republic
- February 2002, twenty kilos (44 pounds) of cocaine seized from two vehicles in Anchorage
- May 2002, twenty-nine kilos (64 pounds) of cocaine seized from pick-up truck being shipped to Anchorage
- August 2002, \$35,000 in counterfeit cash plus one kilo of cocaine seized in Anchorage. This is the largest counterfeit cash seizure ever in Alaska

Nearly all of the agencies that have a drug enforcement responsibility, including DEA, FBI, Alaska State Troopers, Anchorage Police Department, Customs, ATF, IRS, INS, Anchorage Airport Police, and the Alaska National Guard Counter Drug Support Program participated in this effort. It had a direct impact on the amount of cocaine, and therefore the quality of life, in the Anchorage and surrounding area.



Emerging Trends in 2002

The most obvious trend that continues to emerge across the state is the proliferation of methamphetamine sales, use, and production. As stated in the text of this report, methamphetamine is being seen across the state in larger and larger amounts. While the number of clandestine labs eradicated in 2002 did not reach the high of 2000, current statistics show that the state appears to be back on the track to meet and exceed those numbers in 2003.

It is the intent of the Statewide Drug Enforcement program to maintain and increase the pressure on those involved in methamphetamine. Across the nation, the one effort that has paid dividends is constant unrelenting enforcement pressure. Once methamphetamine has taken a strong toehold in a community, the community is at great risk for social decay from within. It is the intent and purpose of the Statewide Drug Enforcement program not to allow that to happen in Alaska.

Other efforts that will continue, and actually increase, are the investigations into illegal shipment and sales of alcohol in local option communities. With funds from alternate sources, as well as traditional program funds, the task of pursuing “bootleggers” will be expanded and enhanced. This effort is critical to improving the living conditions of those in the affected communities. Between the efforts of the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit and the efforts of AST’s “C” Detachment, five full time investigators are working within a program that will make an immediate impact in the local option villages.

Cocaine continues to be a high priority for the Drug Enforcement Unit. There has never been a shortage of cocaine in Alaska. Even with the phenomenal results of Operation Arctic Heat, the availability of cocaine quickly rebounded.

Summary

The Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit, with its unique ability to interdict and investigate cases across the state, recognized that drug abuse is not confined to any one geographical location or any economic strata in the state. Drug and alcohol abuse affects all Alaskans, despite all social, ethnic, racial and economic barriers.

The Alaska State Troopers, Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit is committed to working with any interested agency in the fight against substance abuse throughout the state using innovative concepts to deal with the illegal sale and distribution of drugs. We are also committed to focusing on increased awareness and knowledge of drug abuse through educational presentations to the Public Safety Academy and in public forums, such as schools, service organizations and other community groups.



The Alaska State Troopers, Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit supplied the majority of information and photos presented in this report. Additional data was obtained from Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) publications, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) and the Alaska Justice Forum.

The 2002 Annual Drug Report is a publication of the Alaska State Troopers, Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit. It can also be accessed via the Department of Public Safety Internet site therefore there is no publication cost and is intended to inform Alaskans about the type and frequency of drug related crime reported in Alaska during 2002.