



Huntington Police Department News Release

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New task force aimed at dismantling drug trafficking organizations

HUNTINGTON – The Appalachia High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (AHIDTA) and the Huntington Police Department announced the formation of a new task force on April 2 that is designed to pursue the dismantlement of drug trafficking organizations in the area.

The task force, which will be known as the Huntington Violent Crime-Drug Task Force, will consist of Huntington Police officers, a Barboursville Police officer and ATF special agents. It will also coordinate with the DEA, the Cabell County Prosecutor’s Office and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of West Virginia.

“This task force takes our longstanding partnerships to a new level of effectiveness,” Huntington Police Chief Hank Dial said. “It will allow for the rapid, thorough investigation of drug dealers, followed by strong prosecution of offenders. We will be even more proactive in taking down drug offenders before they can become trigger pullers in our community.”

“From the first day I took the oath of office, Huntington has been an urgent priority for me,” U.S. Attorney Mike Stuart added. “We have built unprecedented federal, state and local partnerships with a single goal in mind – protecting the people of Huntington by taking back our streets from the out of state drug thugs that cause death, destruction and despair. We will continue to fight against those that come here to do harm. This new task force will further strengthen our impact for the families of Huntington.”

Stuart continued, “Task forces are the foundation of law enforcement efforts around the country. All of our task forces are comprised of federal, state and local agents from our communities and dedicated to protecting our communities. I am quite enthusiastic about the formation of the Huntington Violent Crime-Drug Task Force and the impact it can have in the greater Huntington region. I want to thank AHIDTA for their funding of this important initiative.”

AHIDTA will fund the new task force at \$97,000 annually, provide training opportunities to Task Force officers, and strengthen intelligence capabilities and information sharing with law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

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“Appalachia HIDTA is pleased to provide resources to bring an end to the drug scourge in Huntington,” AHIDTA Director Vic Brown said. “We believe the partnerships this initiative forms will make a dramatic impact in the lives of those affected.”

By sharing resources, the Huntington Violent Crime-Drug Task Force will work toward a common goal of reducing and preventing drug- and gun-related crimes and continuing to lower violent crime rates in the region. Huntington’s violent crime rate fell 21 percent in 2018 compared to the previous year.

“ATF is committed to reducing gun violence and illicit drug trafficking in Huntington and surrounding communities by working with our law enforcement partners to arrest armed violent offenders and their sources,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Stuart Lowrey of the Louisville Field Division. “This partnership promises to combine the unique resources of each agency to ensure a dramatic impact on criminal activity. It’s a clear message to armed drug dealers in Huntington – you will be arrested and there is no parole in the federal prison system.”

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