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**MULTIJURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK FORCES IN INDIANA:  
The First Two Years of Operations**

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**INDIANA CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE  
INSTITUTE**

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**SPECIAL ANALYSIS SERIES ON DRUGS IN INDIANA**

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**CENTER FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION  
and the  
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION FOR A DRUG-FREE INDIANA**

138573

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The Center for Criminal Justice Research and Information is part of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. It is comprised of two entities: the Indiana Statistical Analysis Center and the Research and Information Consortium. The Center's primary mission is to compile, analyze and disseminate information supportive of criminal and juvenile justice decision-making in Indiana and to conduct policy research on issues confronting justice system agencies in the State. An additional mission is to develop linkages between criminal justice practitioners and university researchers that promote improved management of the Indiana justice system.

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MULTIJURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK FORCES IN INDIANA:  
The First Two Years of Operations

by

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September, 1990

A Special Analysis Series Report on Drug Problems  
and Drug Control Strategies in Indiana

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Prepared by the

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of a larger effort to provide more policy-relevant information about strategies and interventions for combatting drug problems in Indiana, the Center for Criminal Justice Research and Information conducted an analysis of data reported by twenty-five federally-supported multijurisdictional drug task forces operating in the State during 1988 and 1989. The analysis was conducted to assess the activities and performance of these task forces during the two year period they were supported with federal grant funds.

### HIGHLIGHTS

A summary of the results of the analysis is presented below. This is followed by a brief discussion of the limitations of the data and recommendations regarding funding and managing federally-supported drug task forces in Indiana.

#### Outputs of Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces

- In 1989, 2,002 drug arrests were made by the twenty-five multijurisdictional drug task forces. This represents a 78% increase in arrests over the number of arrests in the previous year.
- Half of the arrests made in 1989 involved cocaine. Smaller percentages of arrests involved marijuana, amphetamines, LSD and other controlled substances. Cocaine arrests increased by 82% between 1988 and 1989.
- In 1989, 458 seizures were made of drug offenders' assets that were estimated to have a total value of nearly \$3.3 million. Almost \$1 million was seized in cash alone. Real property and vehicles seized were valued at slightly over \$2 million.

#### Objectives of Task Forces

- Task force directors reported that the most important objectives of their task forces are:
  - (1) to arrest and prosecute major drug dealers,
  - (2) to reduce the availability of drugs in task

force jurisdictions, and (3) to establish cooperative working relationships with other drug enforcement agencies.

- Most task forces indicated they targeted high level drug dealers and cocaine. Marijuana, LSD, methamphetamines and heroin were also considered high priority drug targets.
- Most task force directors agreed that since establishing their task forces, communication and coordination among law enforcement agencies and intelligence networks have improved.
- When surveyed in October of 1989, only 39 percent of project directors thought the drug availability and dealing situation in their jurisdictions had improved after the development of their task forces. In contrast, when surveyed again in July of 1990, 71 percent thought the drug availability and dealing situation had improved.

#### Contributions of Task Forces and Problems with Task Forces

- When asked about the ways task forces have helped them deal with the drug problem, task force directors pointed to more and better resources available for drug enforcement (e.g., manpower, equipment), improved communications among law enforcement agencies, and an improved capacity to identify and to target drug dealers.
- Task force directors expressed concern about interjurisdictional jealousies and turf-consciousness among law enforcement agencies and their impact on operations. Many also reported difficulty complying with grant application and reporting requirements of the Institute, problems managing asset seizures and forfeitures, as well as problems finding and keeping reliable drug informants.

### METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

This report is based on data submitted quarterly by twenty-five drug task forces that received federal funds through the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute during 1988 and 1989. In several instances the data

reported were incomplete and grantees complained of difficulty in understanding exactly what data were to be submitted. This situation has been exacerbated by several changes in quarterly reporting forms over the last two years. Limited attempts have been made to verify the reliability of operations data being submitted by task forces. For the most part, project directors were asked to clarify anomalies in their data over the telephone and asked to verify, through the mail, the accuracy of annual summaries of their quarterly data.

In addition, while there are many multijurisdictional drug task forces operating in Indiana, the data presented in this report pertain only to the twenty-five that received federal Anti-Drug Abuse monies from the Institute. Accordingly, readers should be careful not to make generalizations about all drug task forces operating in the state from the data.

assets are being used to support operations.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute and others should continue to view multijurisdictional drug task forces as a potentially effective approach to drug enforcement in Indiana and continue to allocate Anti-Drug Abuse funds to support their development and operation.
- The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute should periodically hold training sessions or seminars for drug task force grantees. These sessions should be designed to help grantees better understand the administrative and reporting requirements of their grants, address problems and issues that have arisen in the course of task force operations, and provide an opportunity for grantees to share their ideas with other grantees.
- Grantee site visits should be made periodically to assess and improve the reliability of quarterly performance data being submitted to the Institute.
- Finally, to increase the Institute's capacity to evaluate multijurisdictional drug task forces in Indiana, future research should be designed to provide more and better quality information about (1) the types of drug offenders being arrested (e.g., high level dealers, street level dealers), (2) changes in the availability of drugs in task force jurisdictions, (3) the impact of asset seizures on drug offenders, (4) asset forfeiture procedures being followed by task forces, and (5) how forfeited

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# MULTIJURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK FORCES IN INDIANA: THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF OPERATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

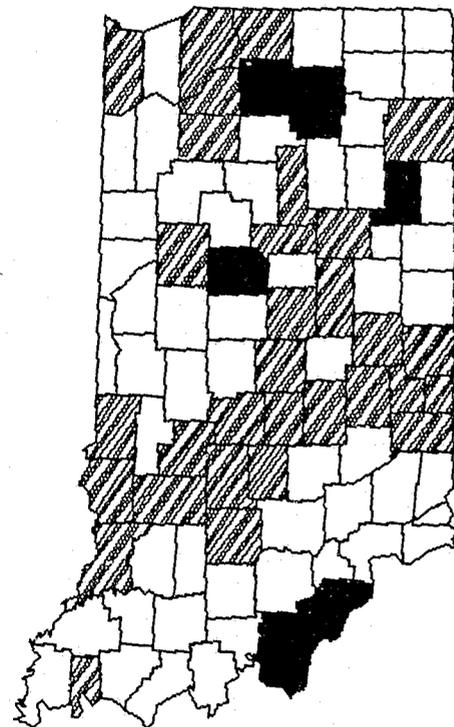
This report is one in a special series of analytic reports being prepared on drugs in Indiana. The series is designed to provide policymakers and others involved in combatting drug problems in the State with information about:

- (1) The scope and magnitude of alcohol and other drug abuse problems in Indiana;
- (2) Strategies being used to address alcohol and other drug abuse problems in the State; and
- (3) The performance of strategies implemented in Indiana, or in other states, to address problems of drug abuse.

This particular report focuses on multijurisdictional drug task force operations in Indiana during 1988 and 1989. It assesses the activities and performance of twenty-five drug task forces supported with federal funds granted by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute during these years.

Over the past two years a number of Indiana law enforcement agencies have started working together through task forces to combat drug crime in the State. By sharing personnel, narcotics intelligence and other types of resources, these agencies hope to become more effective in tackling drug crime...particularly drug crime that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. This report focuses on the operations of twenty-five multijurisdictional drug task forces active in Indiana during 1989. Nineteen of these task forces were also operating in 1988. All received grant funds under the Federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act. Data displayed in the report were obtained from three sources: from quarterly reports submitted by task forces and from two surveys of task force project directors. One of the surveys was conducted in the fall of 1989 and the other in the summer of 1990. The two surveys asked project directors for their opinions about the usefulness of task forces and the problems associated with implementing them.

Figure 1  
Counties where Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces Operated In 1988 and 1989



 Task forces operating in 1988 and 1989  
 Task forces operating in 1989

*The State Police task force operated statewide in both years.*

Readers should be careful in making comparisons among task forces and drawing conclusions about their productivity from the data presented. There is substantial variation in both the organization and management of drug task forces, as well as the objectives they pursue. Many of those examined in this report did not operate for a full twelve months during either 1988 or 1989. These and other factors are certain to influence levels of operation including arrests, investigations, drug removals and asset seizures. A separate evaluation of two of the task forces is being completed by researchers in the Department of Criminal Justice, Indiana University-Bloomington, through a grant from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. Results of the evaluation will be available in the fall of this year.

### Objectives of Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces

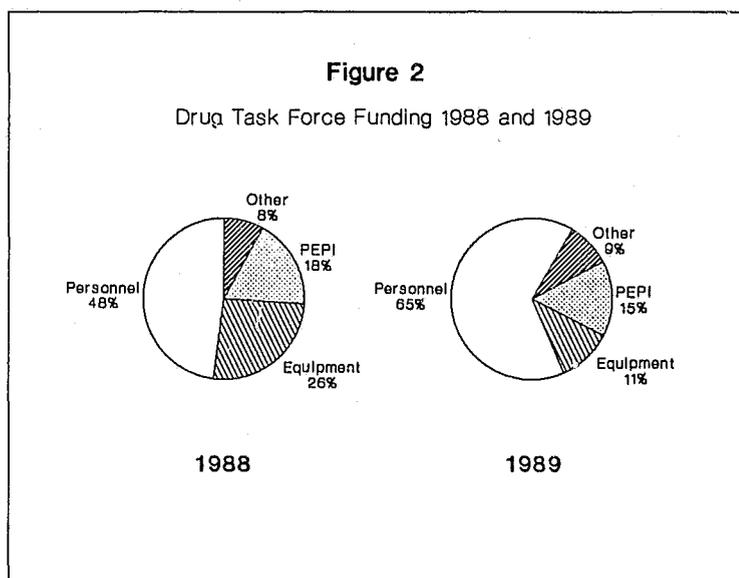
In general, multijurisdictional drug task forces seek to enhance, through joint operations, the ability of federal, state and local criminal justice authorities to target narcotics trafficking conspiracies and to remove offenders through arrest, prosecution and conviction. While there is some variation in the objectives of task forces, most are guided by one or more of the following:

1. To disrupt drug trafficking in targeted communities;
2. To arrest and bring to trial drug traffickers and dealers, as well as drug users;
3. To develop narcotics intelligence systems for targeting drug investigation and enforcement efforts;
4. To remove drugs from jurisdictions or, severely limit their availability;
5. To establish cooperative enforcement networks among criminal justice agencies; and
6. To seize the property of convicted drug offenders.

### Funding for Drug Task Forces in 1988 and 1989

By the end of 1989, the twenty-five drug task forces had been awarded \$1,747,786 in Federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act funds through the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. Coupled with the match contribution of State and local grant recipients, the task forces had a total of \$3,011,813 available to support their operations; most (65%) was budgeted for personnel. Fifteen percent was set aside for the purchase of evidence and the purchase of information (PEPI) and 11 percent for equipment (see figure 2). Because grant start-up and completion dates for task forces usually do not coincide with a calendar year, many task forces did not spend all of their available resources by the end of 1989.

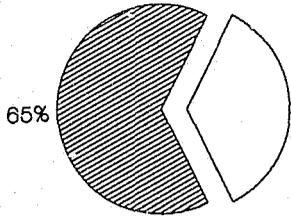
To gain a better understanding of how these resources were used, budget and expenditure information is presented below for four major areas: personnel, equipment, purchase of evidence and information, and other. In some cases, expenditures exceed budgeted amounts. This occurs primarily because budgeted figures do not include amendments or other changes made to grant awards during the year, or because some expenditures were made from grant monies awarded in the previous year.



Total Budgeted: \$3,011,813

Personnel

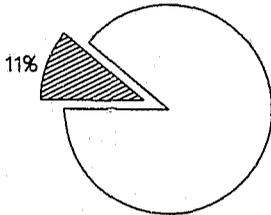
Budgeted: \$1,948,719



Of the \$1,948,719 budgeted for 1989, nearly \$1.8 million was spent to support task force personnel including narcotics investigators, undercover agents, prosecutors and other law enforcement professionals. The \$1.8 million represents a \$500,000 increase in spending for personnel over what was spent in 1988. Some task forces assigned as few as one or two persons to operations while others assigned as many as forty-six. It was common for staffing levels to fluctuate throughout the year.

Equipment

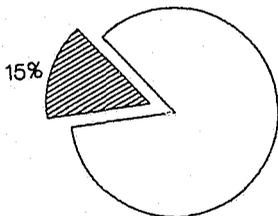
Budgeted: \$ 343,477



\$343,564 was spent for equipment in 1989. This included items such as cellular telephones, transmitters, pagers, nightscopes, listening devices, scramblers, cameras and drug field test kits. Funds were also used to buy or lease unmarked vehicles.

Evidence and Information

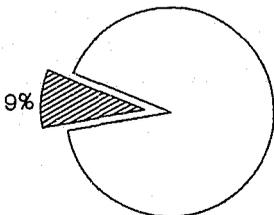
Budgeted: \$ 435,439



\$473,801 was used to purchase evidence or to purchase information (PEPI) during the year. This is more than an 80 percent increase in what was spent on PEPI during 1988. An undetermined amount of money spent in this category came from asset forfeitures. The forfeiture monies partially account for 1989 PEPI expenditures being greater than the amount budgeted.

Other Budget

Budgeted: \$ 284,178



\$119,128 was expended in the other category during 1989. These funds were used to pay for such things as office rental, training related to drug interdiction and enforcement activities, hotels, travel and office supplies.

## MULTIJURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK FORCE OPERATIONS 1988 AND 1989

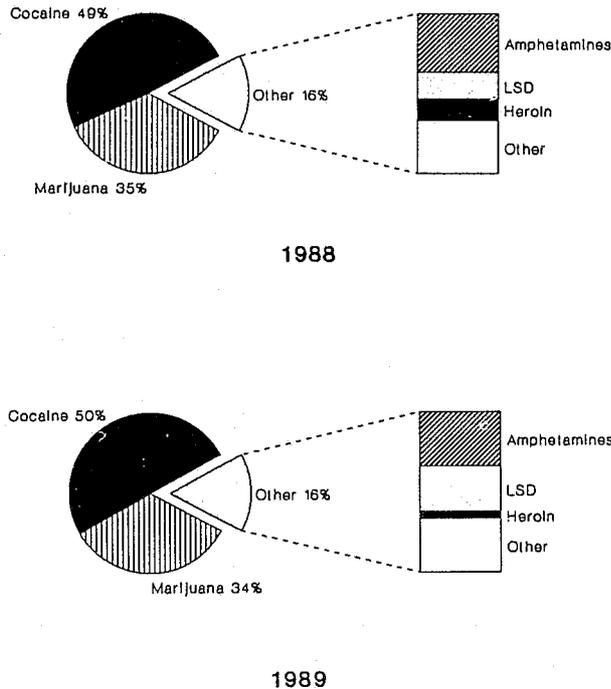
By the end of 1988 fewer than half of the initial nineteen Institute-supported task forces had operated for a full twelve months. For many of these task forces, 1988 was a developmental period in which much time was spent planning and organizing drug enforcement operations. Because of this situation, it was difficult to draw conclusions about the performance of these drug task forces before now. However, with nearly two years of operations completed, it is now possible to at least compare activity levels of task forces over 1988 and 1989 and to assess trends in enforcement activities. Below, comparative data for 1988 and 1989 task force operations are presented. These include arrests for drugs associated with offenders' most serious charges, the quantities of drugs seized or purchased by task forces, and the type and estimated value of assets seized over the two year period.

### Arrests

Between 1988 and 1989 there was virtually no change in the percentages of arrests for various drugs associated with the most serious drug charges made against offenders (see Figure 3). Cocaine arrests accounted for the greatest percentage of arrests in both years. This was followed by marijuana and other controlled substances.

Figure 3

Arrests for Drugs Associated with Most Serious Drug Charge for 1988 and 1989



Overall, there was a 78 percent increase in the number of drug arrests made by task forces between 1988 and 1989 (see Table 1). This amounted to an increase of 827 arrests. Only a small number (99) of these was attributable to the six task forces that began receiving support from the Institute in 1989. Sixteen of the 19 task forces operating in 1988 and 1989 reported increases in the number of drug arrests they made. The task forces reporting the greatest increases in arrests were operated by the Indiana State Police, the Metro Drug Task Force and the St. Joseph County Prosecutor's Office. Each of these made at least 100 more arrests in 1989 than what they made in 1988.

**Table 1**  
**Comparison of Drug Arrests by Type of Drug**  
**for 1988 and 1989**

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Cocaine	554	1,011	82 %
Marijuana	397	678	71 %
Amphetamines	64	107	67 %
LSD	29	87	200 %
Heroin	24	14	- 42 %
Other	57	105	84 %
	<u>1,125</u>	<u>2,002</u>	78 %

As shown in Table 1 there was an increase in the number of arrests for every type of drug except heroin. Though the number of LSD arrests is relatively small, this category had the largest percentage increase (200%) in arrests.

Eighty-two percent of those arrested were males and 94 percent were eighteen years of age or older. Nearly half (47%) were repeat offenders. Most were arrested for distributing drugs (58%) or for possessing drugs (34%).

**Drug Seizures and Purchases**

Table 2 shows the trends in drug seizures and purchases by type of drug for 1988 and 1989. While seizures and purchases of non-plant marijuana, amphetamines, LSD and other controlled substances increased between these years, seizures and purchases of cocaine, hashish, heroin and plant marijuana decreased. The greatest percentage increases were in amphetamine seizures and purchases (1,067%) and LSD seizures and purchases (863%). The greatest percentage decreases were in hashish (-91%) and cocaine (-75%).

**Table 2**

Comparison of Drug Seizures and Purchases by  
Type of Drug for 1988 and 1989

	---Drug Seizures and Purchases---		
	1988	1989	Percent Change
Cocaine <sup>1</sup>	99.53 kg. <sup>2</sup>	25.18 kg.	- 75 %
Marijuana	372.17 kg.	415.25 kg.	12 %
	12,947 pl.	7,721 pl.	- 40 %
Hashish <sup>3</sup>	461.60 gr.	36.50 gr.	- 92 %
Amphetamines <sup>3</sup>	115.50 gr	1,347.66 gr.	1,067 %
Heroin	1,579.32 gr.	801.51 gr.	- 49 %
LSD	1,142 du.	10,993 du.	863 %
Other <sup>4</sup>	1,439 du.	3,151 du.	119 %

Note (1) includes "crack" cocaine

Note (2) kg. = kilograms gr. = grams du. = dosage units pl. = plants

Note (3) one task force reported seizing a pound of hashish in the second quarter 1988 and purchasing 1,071 grams of amphetamines in the third quarter 1989

Note (4) includes depressants, stimulants and other narcotics

**Asset Seizures**

Asset seizures are seen by many criminal justice professionals as one way of impairing the ability of drug offenders to continue with their illicit drug activity or trade. They are also seen as a potential resource base for funding future task force operations. During 1988, 12 of the 19 multijurisdictional drug task forces reported seizing the assets of offenders. During 1989, 18 of the 25 task forces reported seizing assets. In all, 458 seizures with an estimated value of nearly \$3.3 million were made in 1989. The number of asset seizures increased by 16 percent between the two years, while the estimated value of assets seized in 1989 was 125% more than the estimated value of assets seized in 1988 (see Table 3).

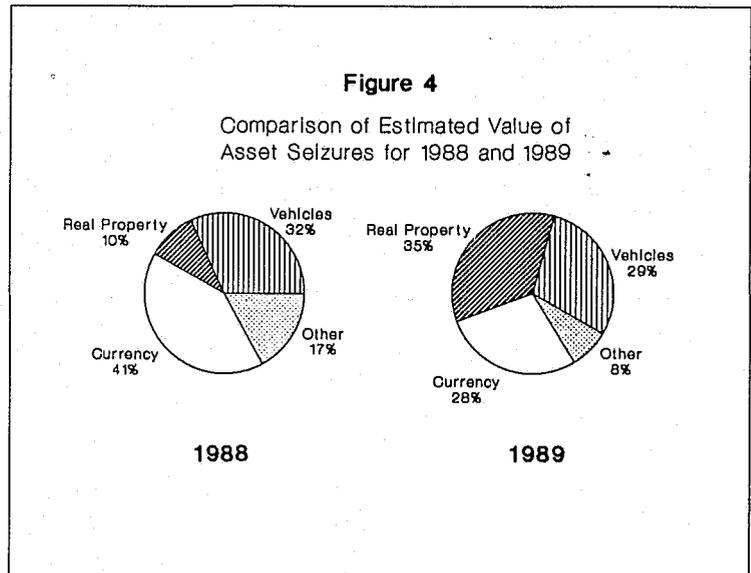


Table 3

## Comparison of Assets Seized for 1988 and 1989

	-----Number of Asset Seizures-----		Percent Change
	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	
Currency	45	96	113 %
Other Fiscal	1	2	100 %
Vehicles	95	159	67 %
Real Property	5	25	400 %
Weapons	120	140	17 %
Vessels	2	-0-	- 100 %
Other Property	126	36	- 71 %
	<u>394</u>	<u>458</u>	16 %

	----Estimated Value of Asset Seizures----		Percent Change
	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	
Currency	\$600,667	\$925,985	54 %
Other Fiscal	62,500	2,051	- 97 %
Vehicles	470,140	965,773	105 %
Real Property	139,300	1,140,500	719 %
Weapons	32,242	24,580	- 24 %
Vessels	14,650	-0-	- 100 %
Other Property	146,789	240,790	64 %
	<u>\$1,466,288</u>	<u>\$3,299,679</u>	125 %

The greatest number of seizures in 1989 involved vehicles, weapons and currency. Currency and vehicle seizures each accounted for nearly \$1 million of the estimated total value of assets seized in 1989. Though few in number, real property seizures accounted for over \$1.1 million of the estimated value of seizures in 1989.

**DETAILED DATA ON 1988 AND 1989 OPERATIONS OF FEDERALLY-SUPPORTED  
MULTIJURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK FORCES**

Table 4 and Table 5 present detailed information on the operations of the multijurisdictional drug task forces over the two year period. Included in these tables is information about the amount of time each task force has operated, the amount of Anti-Drug Abuse program funding it received, the number of investigations initiated and completed, the number of drug arrests, and the estimated value of assets seized.

Table 4

Detailed Data on 1988 Operations of the Nineteen  
Federally Supported Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces

Task Force Name	Quarters Operating in 1988 (see note 1)	Total Funds (see note 2)	Number of Investigations		Total Persons Arrested	Estimated Value of Asset Seizures	
			Initiated	Completed		-Currency-	-Other-
1 Indiana State Police	4	\$ 586,100	279	166	196	\$ 182,228	\$ 256,080
2 Allen County Sheriff's Dept.	4	187,838	146	136	155	152,759	59,450
3 Anderson Police Dept.	4	60,000	177	97	151	1,305	3,000
4 Evansville Police Dept.	4	86,571	33	1	0	0	0
5 Monroe County Pros. Office	3	320,117	38	6	9	1,800	600
6 Metro Drug Task Force: Marion County Pros. Office Greenwood Police Dept. Carmel Police Dept. Hamilton County Sheriff's Dept. Shelby County Sheriff's Dept.	4	777,027 (see note 3)	282	128	202	215,463	230,200
7 Henry County Sheriff's Dept.	4	210,237	248	160	122	3,000	111,500
8 Howard County Drug Task Force Howard County Pros. Office Kokomo Police Department	3	171,569 (see note 3)	192	143	63	13,375	4,250
9 Lake County Sheriff's Dept.	3	375,269	35	5	12	0	5,000
10 Tri County Drug Task Force: La Porte County Sheriff's Dept. Pulaski County Sheriff's Dept. Starke County Sheriff's Dept.	3	104,270 (see note 3)	76	0	7	18,420	167,791
11 JEAN Team Drug Task Force: Marion Police Dept. Grant County Sheriff's Dept.	3	127,850 (see note 3)	97	91	69	10,874	20,400
12 Tippecanoe County Pros. Office	4	125,050 (see note 4)	--	--	--	--	--
13 Vanderburgh Co. Drug Task Force Vanderburgh Co. Sheriff's Dept. Vanderburgh Co. Pros. Office	4	150,251 (see note 5)	21	11	17	(see note 3)	0
14 St. Joseph County Pros. Office	3	254,166	54	26	74	1,443	850
15 Wabash Valley Drug Task Force: Terre Haute Police Dept. Sullivan County Sheriff's Dept.	2	57,574 (see note 3)	10	4	0	0	0
16 Peru Police Dept.	3	31,386	15	4	0	0	0
17 Connersville Police Dept.	2	32,000	28	0	0	0	0
18 South Bend Police Dept.	3	75,802	43	36	12	0	0
19 Richmond Police Dept.	3	54,135	68	53	36	0	6,500
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$ 3,787,262</b>	<b>1,842</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<b>\$ 600,667</b>	<b>\$ 865,621</b>

Note 1: Quarters refer to calendar year quarters in 1988. The number of quarters is approximate because while the quarter in which federal funds were awarded is known, it is not known when task force operations actually began.

Note 2: Includes both federal and match funds. These are budgeted figures for task force activities, which in many cases extended beyond 1988. They do not reflect amendments or revisions made after the initial award of federal funds.

Note 3: Operations data represent combined activity for all grantees involved in the task force.

Note 4: No operations data were submitted by this task force.

Note 5: For task force #13, funds were used to support a county law enforcement component and a county prosecution component. The table accurately represents the task force activity of the county law enforcement component but understates the total activity of the prosecution component.

Table 5

## Detailed Data on 1989 Operations of the Twenty-Five Federally Supported Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces

Task Force Name	Quarters Operating in 1989 (see note 1)	Total Funds 1989 (see note 2)	Number of Investigations		Total Persons Arrested	Estimated Value of Asset Seizures	
			Initiated	Completed		-Currency-	-Other-
1 Indiana State Police	4	\$ 101,898	279	184	392	\$ 207,088	\$ 1,282,925
2 Allen County Sheriff's Dept.	4	164,315	95	91	156	196,399	93,731
3 Anderson Police Dept.	4	60,000	121	66	70	2,906	851
4 Evansville Police Dept.	4	0	72	42	40	930	215,150
5 Monroe County Pros. Office	4	178,230	66	16	35	1800	600
6 Metro Drug Task Force: Marion County Pros. Office Greenwood Police Dept. Carmel Police Dept. Shelby County Sheriff's Dept.	4	(see note 3) 582,291 31,124 0 4,680	--	--	324	216,966	639,690
7 Henry County Sheriff's Dept.	4	154,374	209	127	130	0	0
8 Howard County Drug Task Force: Kokomo Police Dept. Howard County Pros. Office	4	(see note 4) 125,755 43,445	140	144	55	65,607	44,200
9 Lake County Sheriff's Dept.	4	267,404	82	81	43	17,912	5,817
10 Tri County Drug Task Force: LaPorte County Sheriff's Dept. Pulaski County Sheriff's Dept. Starke County Sheriff's Dept.	4	(see note 4) 38,167 20,466 20,034	44	69	59	71,810	1,000
11 JEAN Team Drug Task Force: Marion Police Dept. Grant County Sheriff's Dept.	4	(see note 4) 53,611 44,182	107	81	68	9,650	2,200
12 Tippecanoe County Pros. Office	4	0 (see note 3)	--	--	140	6,997	14,360
13 Vanderburgh Co. Drug Task Force: Vanderburgh Co. Sheriff's Dept. Vanderburgh Co. Pros. Office	4	(see note 4) 0 79,934	67	43	85	72,753	9,200
14 St. Joseph County Pros. Office	4	195,644	329	159	175	36,086	13,330
15 Wabash Valley Drug Task Force: Terre Haute Police Dept. Sullivan County Sheriff's Dept.	4	(see note 4) 0 0	52	36	50	3,875	17,700
16 Peru Police Dept.	4	14,752	61	56	21	1,580	0
17 Connersville Police Dept.	4	16,012 (see note 3)	--	--	9	1,500	0
18 South Bend Police Dept.	3	0	47	47	14	0	0
19 Richmond Police Dept.	4	36,153	125	49	37	0	10,000
20 Wayne County Sheriff's Dept.	4	25,000 (see note 5)					
21 Wells County Pros. Office	3	30,863	25	10	48	0	0
22 Southeast Ind. Drug Task Force: Floyd County Sheriff's Dept. New Albany Police Dept. Clark County Police Dept. Jeffersonville Police Dept. Floyd County Pros. Office Harrison County Police Dept.	1	(see note 4) 62,854 103,354 36,100 117,063 36,100 76,195	60	47	51	12,123	22,940

23	Plymouth Police Dept.	1	90,846	(see note 5)
24	Kosciusko Co. Sheriff's Dept.	1	154,217	(see note 5)
25	Clinton County Sheriff's Dept.	1	46,750	(see note 5)

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TOTALS			\$ 3,011,813	1,981	1,348	2,002	\$ 925,985	\$ 2,373,694
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Note 1: Quarter refers to calendar year quarters in 1989. The number of quarters is approximate because while the quarter in which federal funds were awarded is known, it is not known when task force operations actually began.

Note 2: Includes both federal and match funds. These are budgeted figures for awards made during 1989. Many task forces were awarded funds in 1988 as well as 1989. They do not reflect budget amendments or revisions made after the initial award of federal funds.

Note 3: Not all operations data were submitted by this task force. However, operations data reported represent combined activity for all grantees involved in the task force.

Note 4: Operations data represent combined activity for all grantees involved in the task force.

Note 5: No data were submitted by this task force or grantee by the end of calendar year 1989.

## **RESULTS OF THE 1990 SURVEY OF MULTIJURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK FORCE PROJECT DIRECTORS**

In July of 1990, project directors of the twenty-five multijurisdictional drug task forces operating in 1989 were surveyed to assess the performance of their task forces and to gain a better understanding of problems they encountered in setting up and operating them. Twenty-two of the project directors returned survey questionnaires. Their responses are summarized below in five areas: (1) using asset forfeitures to finance task force operations, (2) major objectives and targets of task forces, (3) impacts and changes resulting from task forces, (4) ways task forces have helped drug enforcement, and (5) difficulties in implementing task forces. A similar survey had been conducted about a year ago in October of 1989. Where appropriate, the results of the 1989 survey are compared with the results of the 1990 survey.

### **Will Asset Forfeitures Support Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces in the Future?**

Obtaining resources to support future drug enforcement operations is a major concern for most task forces. According to the survey completed a year ago, without federal grant monies the majority of task forces operating in 1988 would not have been created. Thus, it is not surprising that many task force proponents are hopeful that asset seizures and forfeitures will provide a viable mechanism for financing multijurisdictional drug task force operations in the years to come.

More than half (55%) of the project directors surveyed in 1990 thought that asset seizures and forfeitures would only partially support their drug task force operations in future years. A quarter did not think asset forfeitures would ever support operations. The remainder (20%) thought it was still too premature to judge whether seizures could generate sufficient resources. These survey results are almost identical to those of the survey conducted in 1989.

### **What Are the Major Objectives and Targets of Drug Task Forces?**

In order to assess the performance of drug task forces, it is necessary to have a clearer understanding of their objectives. Therefore, part of the survey was designed to gather information about the objectives and targets being pursued by the twenty-five task forces. Project directors were presented with a list of objectives and asked to indicate which were major objectives, minor objectives, or not objectives of their task forces. Table 6 summarizes their responses. Project directors were also asked to identify the two most important objectives of their task forces and the types of drugs and offenders being targeted.

**Table 6**

**Project Directors' Perceptions of Drug Task Force Objectives  
(n=22)**

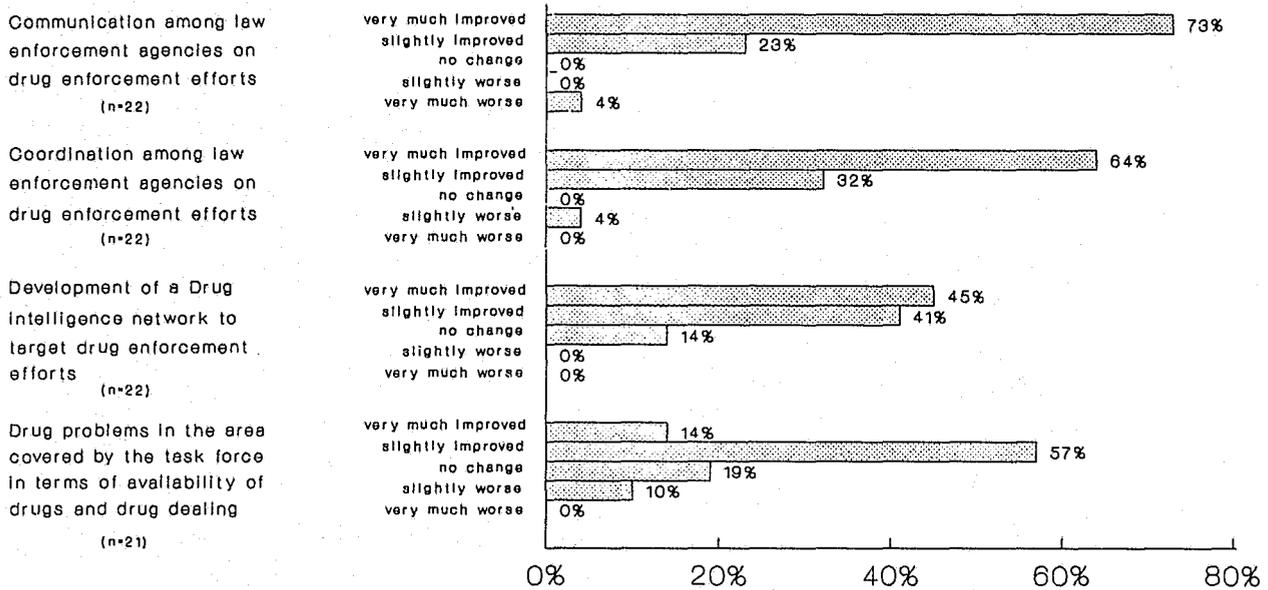
<u>Objective</u>	<u>-Percent of Directors Seeing as-</u>		
	<u>A Major Objective</u>	<u>A Minor Objective</u>	<u>Not an Objective</u>
(1) To reduce the availability of drugs	100%	-	-
(2) To establish cooperative working relationships	91%	9%	-
(3) To arrest and prosecute high level drug distributors/dealers	86%	14%	-
(4) To develop narcotics intelligence systems	82%	18%	-
(5) To seize the property of drug offenders	77%	23%	-
(6) To arrest and prosecute street level dealers	68%	32%	-
(7) To arrest and prosecute street level users	10%	57%	33%

Almost all objectives presented in the survey questionnaire were considered to be major objectives of drug task forces. However, three were most frequently cited as being most important: (1) to arrest and prosecute major drug dealers, (2) to reduce the availability of drugs and drug dealing in jurisdictions, and (3) to establish cooperative working relationships with other law enforcement agencies. Only a few respondents considered the arrest and prosecution of street level users to be a major objective of their enforcement efforts. Drug dealers were identified most frequently as the type of offender being targeted by task forces. Most directors said they targeted "high level" dealers, suppliers, or quantity drug movers. Cocaine, including crack, was the drug most frequently cited as the target of drug enforcement operations. This was followed by marijuana, LSD, methamphetamines, heroin and other controlled substances.

**What Changes Do Project Directors See Occurring as a Result of Task Forces?**

As in the previous year, project directors were asked about several areas that might be affected by the development of multijurisdictional drug task forces. These included communications and coordination among law enforcement agencies, the development of drug intelligence networks, and drug availability and drug dealing. Specifically, they were asked to think about the way things were before and after the development of their task forces and then to offer their opinions as to whether things had improved, not changed or worsened.

**Figure 5**  
 Project Directors' Perceptions of Changes  
 Occurring Since the Development of Their Drug Task Force



According to their responses (see Figure 5), improvements have been achieved in a number of areas. Most agree that things have gotten better with respect to communication and coordination among law enforcement agencies and better with respect to the development of drug intelligence networks among agencies. More than 70 percent think there has been at least some improvement in their jurisdictions with regard to drug availability and drug dealing. Overall, perceptions of change in the four areas are substantially more positive than those reported in the survey conducted nearly a year ago. This is particularly true with respect to the drug availability and drug dealing situation. Whereas in 1989 only 39 percent of project directors thought the drug availability and dealing situation had improved after their task forces were implemented, 71 percent of them thought things had improved by the time of the 1990 survey.

**How Drug Task Forces Have Helped Drug Enforcement**

As in the previous year, directors were asked what they thought were the most important ways task forces have helped law enforcement agencies combat drug problems. They most frequently mentioned three areas:

- More and better resources for drug enforcement (mentioned by 15 task forces)
- Improved communications among law enforcement units (mentioned by 11 task forces)

- Improved identification and targeting of drug dealers  
(mentioned by 10 task forces)

#### More and Better Resources for Drug Enforcement

Almost all task force directors mentioned some way in which resources for combatting drugs had improved and, thus, enabled them to become more effective. Comments included:

"The grant provided additional prosecutor staff to work with the task force on a daily basis to insure successful prosecutions."

"Through the purchase of much needed technical equipment, we are able to develop more prosecutable cases and promote more officer safety."

"Increased use of money for buys and equipment has improved the quality of investigations significantly."

"It provided manpower, funds and equipment with which to make purchases and have surveillance of drug dealers."

#### Improved Communications Among Law Enforcement Units

Many also cited improvements in communications and intelligence arising from the task force structure.

"It has led to better organization and communication between agencies in targeting dealers, working on the cases, and bringing them to trial."

"Led to sharing of information between agencies."

"Communication between departments has resulted in a better intelligence system."

"Better exchange of information."

#### Improved Identification and Targeting of Drug Dealers

As in the 1988 survey, several task force directors indicated that the multijurisdictional nature of task forces had promoted involvement and working relationships among agencies at all levels of government and, thus, contributed significantly to their ability to identify and target drug dealers and users.

"Through combined efforts we have been able to identify drug dealers and users previously unknown to us."

"Combining agencies from a three county area has improved the amount of intelligence and cooperation in selecting targets."

"Has enabled us to target larger dealers and organizations."

"Helped Fort Wayne fund crack house raids on practically a daily basis, providing some street control."

"Has allowed us to dedicate our time and effort to working drugs."

"The degree of information and target sharing has been impressive.... We have found that knowing members of other task forces has increased our ability to obtain help and assistance in other geographical areas where we would have previously been unable to accomplish much."

## Difficulties in Establishing and Operating Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces

Again, as in the previous year, project directors were asked to comment on the most serious difficulties they had encountered in setting up and running their task forces. Many expressed concerns in one or more of the following four areas:

- Friction among law enforcement agencies  
(mentioned by 14 task forces)
- Difficulty complying with grant requirements  
(mentioned by 6 task forces)
- Asset seizures and forfeitures  
(mentioned by 6 task forces)
- Drug informants  
(mentioned by 5 task forces)

### Friction Among Law Enforcement Agencies

Task Force directors continue to be concerned about interjurisdictional politics, jealousies, rivalries and turf-consciousness and how these impact on task force operations. Among comments received were the following:

"It's difficult to maintain an atmosphere of trust between all local, state, and federal agencies with drug enforcement responsibilities in our county."

"We're still having turf battles and other problems among the State Police (upper brass), which has caused serious problems with investigations."

"DEA personnel in northern Indiana have created poor relationships between DEA and our task force."

"There's a great deal of jealousy and animosity from narcotics detectives not selected for assignment to the task force."

"We must get over jurisdictional and ego boundaries and let the unit operate without 15 different officers trying to be the boss."

### Difficulty Complying With Grant Requirements

As in the previous year, several task force directors said they had difficulty complying with grant application or reporting requirements.

"The difficulty we have is receiving funding from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute."

"Complex paperwork for grant funding and reports and surveys requested are not always timely."

"Learning to establish and record the proper data to determine the performance/success of the task force."

"Due to the statewide coverage of our enforcement efforts, it is sometimes difficult to obtain all necessary information for quarterly reports."

### Asset Seizures and Forfeitures

As asset seizures and forfeitures have grown, so too have problems in managing them. Several respondents pointed to problems related to the excessive length of time the forfeiture process is taking and how forfeitures are divided up.

"Forfeiture proceedings are definitely too slow."

"Getting asset forfeitures back; too slow!"

"Arguments are occurring over the division of seized and forfeited assets."

"There is a lack of resources to adequately manage prosecution of drug dealers and to utilize civil practice aspect of asset forfeiture proceedings."

### Drug Informants

Difficulties finding and keeping drug informants were mentioned by five respondents. Among their comments were:

"We have serious difficulty in recruiting and keeping informants who are reliable and credible."

"Finding informants who are willing to work."

"We've trouble establishing the confidential informants who are willing to spend the time and effort to make the cases."

### Other Difficulties

Finally, respondents also mentioned a number of other difficulties encountered in establishing or operating their task forces. These include:

"No guidance was given in the manner to start and staff the task force - a model or guide would have been helpful."

"There is a continued problem of lack of sufficient funding at the local level."

"Problems with timely lab reports and consistent sentencing."

"Overburdened court system resulting in a backlog of drug cases."

"Identification of targets outside of urban areas is a problem."

## CONCLUSION

Two questions are of central concern to policymakers when examining the data presented in this report: First, how have federally-supported multijurisdictional drug task forces performed in Indiana? and, second, should the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute and others continue to support their development and operation?

### Task Force Performance

Answers to the first question depend upon how we conceptualize the objectives of multijurisdictional drug task forces. In our research, project directors indicated there are actually a number of objectives being pursued by task forces. Among the most important of these are: (1) to arrest and prosecute major drug offenders, (2) to reduce the availability of drugs and reduce drug dealing, (3) to establish cooperative working relationships and intelligence systems, and (4) to seize the property of drug offenders.

#### • Arrest and prosecute drug offenders

The data for 1988 and 1989 show there has been an overall increase (78%) in the arrests made by drug task forces. Only a small number of the arrests are accounted for by the six additional task forces funded by the Institute in 1989, lending credence to the proposition that 1988 was a developmental period for many of the original nineteen task forces. With the exception of heroin, arrests for all types of targeted drugs have increased. The number of cocaine arrests increased by 82% and marijuana arrests increased by 71%.

No information is available on the specific types of offenders being arrested (e.g., major regional dealer versus street level dealer/user) that would enable us to judge whether task forces are being effective in apprehending targeted offender types. And, no data are available on the dispositions of offenders arrested by task forces to judge the effectiveness of task force prosecution efforts.

#### • Reduce the availability of drugs and drug dealing

It is difficult to make any strong claims about how task forces have affected the availability of drugs or drug dealing in jurisdictions where task forces are operating. However, from the survey of project directors there is some evidence that task forces are having a positive influence. Whereas only 39 percent of project directors surveyed in 1989 thought that the drug availability and dealing situation had improved, 71 percent of project directors surveyed in 1990 thought the situation had improved.

It is impossible to determine how drug seizures and purchases may have affected drug availability and dealing. We do know that seizures and purchases of non-plant marijuana, amphetamines, LSD and other controlled substances increased between 1988 and 1989, while seizures and purchases of cocaine, hashish, heroin and plant marijuana decreased. The extent to which these decreases or increases reflect changes in the availability of drugs or the prevalence of drug dealing is unknown. It is interesting to note, however, that a few survey respondents think that some drugs, particularly cocaine, are drying up in their jurisdictions.

- **Establish cooperative working relationships with other law enforcement agencies and develop narcotics intelligence systems**

From the most recent survey, it is clear that most task force directors think there has been improvement in communication (96%) and coordination (96%) among law enforcement agencies since development of the drug task forces. Likewise, most (86%) think there has been improvement in the development of drug intelligence networks for targeting drug enforcement efforts. Though a few task force directors pointed to difficulties working with other federal, state or local law enforcement agencies, most seemed to be satisfied with progress in this area.

- **Seize the property of drug offenders**

Task forces continue to seize the property of drug offenders. In 1989, 458 seizures were made of drug offenders' property that was estimated to have a total value of nearly \$3.3 million. This is an increase over 1988 levels in both the number of seizures made (16% increase) and the estimated value of seizures (125% increase). About half (55%) of task force directors surveyed indicated that monies from asset seizure and forfeitures would partially support their operations in future years. Several pointed to difficulties they are experiencing with the asset forfeiture process.

No data are available on the amounts of forfeitures realized from seizures or on the uses of seizures and forfeitures by task forces. Finally, no data are available on how asset seizures have affected individual drug offenders, particularly dealers, to assess how seizures impair future drug trade.

Based on the available evidence, it appears that multijurisdictional drug task forces are making some progress in meeting their objectives. This is true with respect to building cooperative working relationships with other agencies to improve drug enforcement. It is also true with respect to seizing the assets of drug offenders. In addition, task force directors perceive they are making headway in reducing drug availability and drug dealing. Lastly, task forces are arresting more drug offenders for offenses involving targeted drugs. Nonetheless, the evidence and analysis do not provide a complete or conclusive assessment of the performance of multijurisdictional drug task forces. Much of the available evidence is in the form of subjective perceptions of task force project directors. There remains a lack of hard data to assess, for example, how asset seizures have impacted on drug offenders, or whether task forces are actually arresting the types of offenders they purport to be targeting (e.g., high level drug dealers). Finally, one of the most pressing evaluative questions persists: Are changes in arrests and other outputs of task force operations due to the multijurisdictional structure of task forces, or would they have occurred with law enforcement agencies operating as they had before joining together?

### **Task Force Funding**

Based on the results of the Center's analysis, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute should continue to view multijurisdictional drug task forces as a potentially effective approach to drug enforcement in Indiana and continue to allocate Anti-Drug Abuse funds to support their development and operation. While the data and analysis in this report offer an incomplete picture of the activities and performance of multijurisdictional drug task forces, they do offer some preliminary evidence that task forces are meeting their stated objectives.

The Institute should take steps to address the administrative and substantive issues raised by task force directors in the two surveys conducted. This would be beneficial to those who operate task forces and it would contribute to the effectiveness of the multijurisdictional drug task force intervention. Periodic training sessions or seminars could be held by the Institute to bring task force personnel together to provide a forum for addressing such issues. The Institute might also consider supporting a newsletter for drug task forces in the state. The Center for Criminal

Justice Research and Information should continue to monitor the performance of drug task forces supported through the Institute and begin to address some of the data and information deficiencies encountered in assessing their performance. In particular, the Center's future research on task forces should be designed to provide more and better information about (1) the types of drug offenders being arrested (e.g., high level dealers, street level dealers), (2) changes in the availability of drugs and drug dealing in task force jurisdictions, (3) the impact of asset seizures on drug offenders, (4) the asset forfeiture procedures being followed by task forces, and (5) how task forces are using forfeited assets.

## Appendix

### Multijurisdictional Drug Task Forces Responding to the 1990 Survey of Project Directors

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Allen County Sheriff's Department  
Anderson Police Department  
Connersville Police Department  
Clinton County Sheriff's Department  
Floyd County Sheriff's Department  
(Southeast Drug Task Force)  
Kosciusko County Sheriff's Department  
Henry County Sheriff's Department  
Howard County Prosecutor's Office  
(Howard County Drug Task Force)  
Indiana State Police  
Lake County Sheriff's Department  
La Porte County Sheriff's Department  
(Tri-County Drug Task Force)  
Marion County Prosecutor's Office  
(Metro Drug Task Force)  
Marion Police Department  
Monroe County Prosecutor's Office  
Peru Police Department  
Plymouth Police Department  
South Bend Police Department  
St. Joseph County Prosecutor's Office  
Terre Haute Police Department  
(Wabash Valley Drug Task Force)  
Vanderburgh County Prosecutor's Office  
(Vanderburgh County Drug Task Force)  
Wayne County Sheriff's Department  
Wells County Prosecutor's Office