

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



Captain Jeff DeVere
Government and Media Relations
(360) 596-4010 – office
(360) 596-4015 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

*****For Immediate Release*****

Date: October 29, 2009
Contact: Sergeant Ed McAvoy
Phone: (509) 249-6722
Cell: (509) 728-0564
E-mail: Edward.mcavoy@wsp.wa.gov

Yakima Area Troopers Seize 15 lbs of Marijuana

YAKIMA, WA. Washington State Patrol troopers patrolling along SR 97 south of Toppenish pulled over a southbound 2000 Toyota Camry for speeding. The two troopers were working together as part of the Washington State Patrols Serious Highway Criminal Apprehension Team (SHCAT). When a trooper approached the driver he was able to smell an overwhelming odor of marijuana. Utilizing his skills as a trained narcotics canine handler and criminal interdiction trooper, the trooper discovered the driver was carrying nearly 15 pounds of marijuana along with over \$7,000 cash. Fernando Mendoza, age 21 of Santa Maria, California along with his passenger Jose Rosales-Rodriguez, age 24 of Visalia, California were booked into the Yakima County Jail for possession of marijuana with intent to deliver, the cash and car were also seized.

This arrest is a continuing effort to interdict criminals traveling along Washington's Highways and is the second major interdiction arrest this month. On October 15th a SHCAT trooper arrested a driver for carrying 1 pound of marijuana and an ounce of cocaine which resulted in another vehicle seizure. The Washington State Patrol has 10 specially trained Troopers in criminal interdiction including one narcotic detecting canine throughout the Yakima/Sunnyside area. Two Troopers along with the narcotic detecting canine are specifically assigned to work as team when not responding to calls for service or other assigned duties.

Since the beginning of 2009 Yakima/Sunnyside area troopers made 459 Drug arrests, 74 were felonies and seized nearly \$20,000 along with six vehicles. Troopers work closely with local drug taskforces referring eight for follow-up investigations.

