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Sultan raid yields stolen goods

Cars, tools, electronics, guns and drugs are found

By Diana Hefley
Herald Writer

SULTAN - About 50 police officers raided a suspected fencing operation and illegal wrecking yard just outside of Sultan early Thursday.

Investigators uncovered seven stolen vehicles among dozens of dismantled trucks, cars and trailers scattered around the property.

Stacked floor to ceiling inside a house, boxes of tools and stereo equipment were also found, along with nearly two dozen guns and other property police believe had been stolen. A drug dog sniffed out about \$5,000 worth of methamphetamine stuffed in a safe, Washington State Patrol Sgt. Brad Hudson said.

Police were expecting to work into the night hauling it all out. It likely will take weeks to sort through the electronics and tools to determine who rightfully owns the property, Hudson said.

One man, 41, was arrested for investigation of possessing stolen property. Police arrested another man, 46, on suspicion of possession of methamphetamine.

Four other people were taken into custody and later released.

Thursday's raid brings to an end a monthlong investigation by Snohomish County sheriff's deputies, Sultan police and the State Patrol.

"It's been a real sore spot for us," Sultan Police Chief Fred

Walser said. "An awful lot of dopers are coming and going from here and causing all sorts of trouble."

Informants told police that stolen property was being traded for meth at the residence, Hudson said.

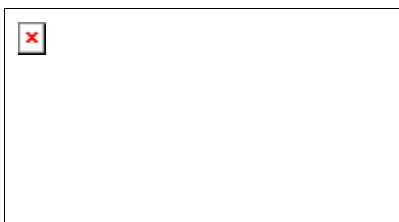
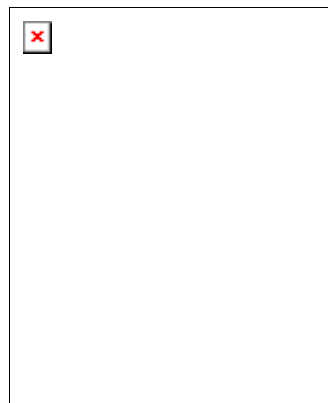
Three small drug labs have been shut down in the same area in recent months. "We've been having problems with squatters and people in and out of this area," sheriff's Lt. John Brand said.

The people found at the residence likely are squatters, Hudson said, adding that the property owner lives out of state.



Michael O'Leary / The Herald

A man is held in custody in Sultan after a search warrant was executed Thursday morning by the Washington State Patrol, the Sultan Police Department and the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office. Two men were arrested, one on suspicion of possession of stolen property and the other on suspicion of possession of methamphetamine.



Deputies and Sultan police called the State Patrol in on the investigation. The patrol has the authority to inspect wrecking yards.

U.S. 2 was shut down for a few minutes while a cavalry of police vehicles rolled through downtown, across the Skykomish River and circled the property, blocked off by a chain-link fence lined with tarps.

The State Patrol's armored vehicle, loaded with SWAT team members, lumbered into the compound shortly after 7 a.m. to serve a search warrant.

Investigators were uncertain how many people they'd find on the property and where they might be, Hudson said.

Troopers quickly took six people into custody. They found two sleeping in a car. No one was injured.

The men and women were handcuffed and secured in a van while dozens of troopers, deputies and police officers scoured the property and later the house.

Police hope the raid will mean fewer problems in town. They also plan to keep the pressure on.

"This will not be the end of it," Brand said. "We'll be working to clean it up."

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