

OSP trooper uncovers \$1.2 million worth of Ecstasy

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with Schedule I manufacturing, possession and distribution of a controlled substance, said OSP.

Gaither was aided during the stop by Trooper Greg Costanzo and his drug detection canine, "Cookie," as well as OSP and federal DEA detectives.

Ecstasy, also known as MDMA, is a psychoactive drug chemically similar to the stimulant methamphetamine and the hallucinogen mescaline, according to the

National Institute of Drug Abuse.

Other street names include Adam, XTC, hug, beans, and love drug.

OSP said that it used to be ingested primarily at dance clubs, raves and college scenes, but now is being used in other social settings.

"Ecstasy can be dangerous to health, and, on rare occasions, lethal," OSP said.

Prior to last week's seizure, the largest haul of the drug in a traffic stop is be-

lieved to have occurred in February, when an OSP sergeant seized approximately 6.5 pounds of Ecstasy on I-5 near Salem.

OSP is committed "to do all that it can with its available resources," said Superintendent Ron Ruecker.

"We know that officers on patrol in this country make more drug cases than all the other elements of law enforcement combined," he said. "We all agree that drugs ravage our communi-

ties and take lives. "Within the past two years," Ruecker said, "at least two young adults have died as a direct result of Ecstasy use, not to mention thousands more who are abusing this drug."

"We are very proud of Trooper Gaither," he said, "and the investigative skills she demonstrated."

"We may not have as many officers out there as we need to protect the public, but Oregonians can be proud of the troopers we have," Ruecker said.

I-5 one of top U.S. highways frequented by drug runners

Interstate 5 -- which lies between San Ysidro in San Diego County at the Baja California, Mexico border; and at the Washington state/Canadian border at Blaine, Wash. -- is one of the top five U.S. corridors for transporting illegal drugs.

Oregon State Police so noted that fact last week following seizure of a record amount of the illegal drug, Ecstasy, during an I-5 traffic

stop in Jackson County.

OSP troopers have made several notable drug seizures during 2005, most of them along I-5. They include:

*Oct. 10 - Marijuana plants discovered by a trooper during a traffic stop on Hwy. 730 in N.E. Oregon led to the discovery of nearly 1,500 marijuana plants in Washington.

*Sept. 29 - Approxi-

mately six pounds of crystal methamphetamine were found by a trooper during a traffic stop on I-5 north of Medford.

*June 29 - Nearly 63 pounds of marijuana were seized by an OSP sergeant during a traffic stop on I-84 near Hood River.

*April 1 - Some 323 pounds of pot were found by a trooper during a traffic stop in I-5 near Salem.

Officials indicate that I-5 is the roadway of choice for drug-runners because of the major cities it passes through: San Diego, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Eugene, Salem, Portland, Olympia, Tacoma and Seattle. Plus, San Francisco is a relatively short distance off I-5 via I-80 and I-580.

Of I-5's 1,375 miles: 792 are in California, 307 in Oregon; 276 in Washington.

Hearing loss affecting older adults not an unheard of situation

Hearing loss is one of the most common conditions affecting older adults.

Roughly one-third of persons older than 60, and 40 to 50 percent of those 75 and older in the United States have hearing loss.

People with hearing loss find it difficult to talk with friends and family. They also may have trouble understanding a doctor's advice; responding to warnings; and hearing doorbells.

There are two general categories of hearing loss.

Sensorineural hearing loss occurs when there is damage to the inner ear or

the auditory nerve. This type of hearing loss is permanent.

Conductive hearing loss occurs when sound waves cannot reach the cochlea. The cause may be earwax build-up, fluid, or a punctured eardrum. Medical or surgical treatment can usually restore this loss.

One form of hearing loss, presbycusis, comes on gradually as a person ages.

Presbycusis can occur because of changes in the inner ear, auditory nerve, middle ear, or outer ear. Some causes are aging, loud noise, heredity, head injury, infection, illness, certain

prescription drugs, and circulation problems such as high blood pressure.

Presbycusis commonly affects people older than 50, many of whom are likely to lose some hearing each year. Having presbycusis may make it hard for a person to tolerate loud sounds or to hear what others are saying.

Tinnitus, also common in older people, is the ringing, hissing, or roaring sound in the ears frequently caused by exposure to loud noise or certain medicines.

Tinnitus is a symptom, not a disease, so it can accompany any type of hear-

ing loss.

Tinnitus also can be a sign of other important health problems, such as allergies and problems in the heart and blood vessels. Tinnitus can come and go, or it can persist or stop altogether.

Hearing problems that are ignored or untreated can get worse. If you have a hearing problem, help is available.

Hearing aids, special training, certain medicines, and surgery are some of the choices that can help people with hearing problems.

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