



September 16, 2020

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Weld County Sheriff's Office K9 team finds \$500K in methamphetamine
Traffic stop part of larger Weld County Drug Task Force investigation

A Weld County Sheriff's Office K9 team recently participated in a traffic stop that resulted in the seizure of more than \$500,000 in illegal drugs.

About 8:45 a.m. Aug. 30, Deputy Brian Fortin and his K9 partner, Loki, responded to Weld County roads 49 and 42 about eight miles south of Kersey to assist the Colorado State Patrol with a traffic stop. The state patrol had pulled over a white pickup and suspected the two men inside, Arturo Mercado and Jesus Arturo Gonzalez, were trafficking narcotics. Loki, an American Society of Canine Trainers Certified Narcotics Detection dog, was called to perform an open-air sniff of the exterior of the vehicle.

Loki alerted to the presence of narcotics in the pickup. Mercado and Gonzalez were taken into custody while troopers and deputies searched the vehicle. That search yielded 88 pounds of methamphetamine with a total estimated street value of \$528,000, or \$6,000 per pound.

Some of the methamphetamine was packed in a suitcase found in the backseat of the pickup. The majority had been hidden inside the truck's spare tire.

The coordinated traffic stop was part of a broader investigation by the Weld County Drug Task Force and the Drug Enforcement Administration into a drug trafficking operation in Weld. Four days later, on Sept. 2, the task force executed five search warrants in Greeley, Evans and Garden City marking the end of an investigation that netted about 5,000 fentanyl pills, 100 pounds of meth, a pound of cocaine, weapons and about \$250,000 in cash.

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The Weld County Sheriff's Office assisted with the investigation, executing a search warrant at a property in the 2300 block of 49th Street in Evans. There deputies found two pounds of meth and an illegal grow operation encompassing more than 100 marijuana plants.

Anyone with information regarding this or any other crime is asked to call the Weld County Sheriff's Office at (970) 356-4015 or Northern Colorado Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-TIPS (8477)**. **Tips can also be submitted through the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimeshurt.com. Those submitting tips through Crime Stoppers that lead to the arrest and filing of charges on a suspect(s) may be eligible for a cash reward.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steve Reams'.

Steve Reams – Sheriff