

Police Pursuit leads to Known Felon's Drug House

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A multi-agency response to an ongoing Columbia County public nuisance involving illegal drugs, guns, assaults and other criminal and civil violations has put two men and one woman in jail, and has sheriff's deputies looking for a fourth subject after a motor vehicle pursuit on Wednesday evening led to two search warrants conducted over the past two days.

William Matthew Temple, 19, St. Helens, is in custody on unrelated charges from an incident Thursday evening in Saint Helens, but sheriff's deputies believe Temple was the driver in an incident involving an attempt to elude police Wednesday night that led them to 35718 Hods Ln. near St. Helens. Deputies obtained consent that evening from the resident to conduct a search for the suspect, to no avail at the time, but did find firearms in the residence where at least two known felons reside.

Temple, who had warrants for his arrest at the time of the incident, is in custody on possession of methamphetamine, felon in possession of weapons charges and on warrants for Forgery, Identification Theft and Possession of Methamphetamine out of Clark County, Washington. Pending Columbia County Sheriff's Office charges are for Attempt to Elude Police, Reckless Driving and Possession of Methamphetamine, after deputies conducted a secondary search warrant for the vehicle Temple was driving at the time.

Charged later with Felon in Possession of a Firearm and Possession of Methamphetamine is Harley Craig VanDolah, 45, and one of the residents at the Hods Lane address. A third subject at the residence, Audrey Jean Hudson, 43, was also taken into custody on a municipal court detainer.

All three subjects have been associated with the Hods Lane address where the vehicle involved in the initial pursuit was abandoned. Deputies have probable cause to arrest a fourth subject associated with the residence: Rodney Allen VanDolah, on similar charges. Additional charges from earlier incidents are also pending in Columbia County.

After locating the Ford Mustang at the Hods Lane residence Wednesday night and obtaining permission to search the premises for the suspect, deputies returned later that night with a search warrant for the residence, turning up guns, items associated with methamphetamine use and equipment and substances consistent with the manufacture of methamphetamine. The primary residents of the home, Harley and Rodney VanDolah are each convicted felons and are prohibited from possessing firearms. The second search warrant was served today on the vehicle used by Temple on Wednesday to evade capture. This search turned up more evidence related to the manufacture of methamphetamine..

This isn't the first time Sheriff's deputies or other law enforcement has been to the Hods Lane address.

"The sheriff's office has responded to this residence on more than 50 occasions since July of 2000," Sheriff Jeff Dickerson said. "This residence has been the location of numerous police custody situations, code violation reports and clandestine drug site investigations for a number

of years.

"When the canine track Wednesday night led to this house, it wasn't a big surprise to us," he said.

Sheriff's deputies became interested again in the residence after a deputy in a marked police vehicle began chasing a red 1990 Ford Mustang on Gable Road near Columbia Boulevard in St. Helens. The deputy attempted to stop the car for a traffic violation, but the Mustang sped off, turning on Columbia Boulevard and speeding past a school and residences.

The deputy terminated the pursuit at that time for the sake of public safety, but followed the guidance of residents in the area until the Mustang was located, abandoned in a field at the address on Hods Lane.

A canine officer from the St. Helens Police Department responded to the location and began a track directly to the main house on the property. Temple, the driver of the Mustang was not located, however a resident at the house gave deputies permission to look inside for the suspect.

"Given the nature of the calls we have received at this location, overtime was authorized to keep out enough deputies to handle the situation," the sheriff said. "We also called two reserve deputies and received help from the St. Helens Police Department and Oregon State Police in the search of the premises and later with the service of the search warrant.

"With only one deputy and a sergeant working regular hours at the time, other calls for service were put on hold as we concentrated on this ongoing community nuisance." Budget cuts have hampered the sheriff's office's ability to respond to more than one call at a time. In an effort to solve community problems with the resources they have, deputies are focusing concentrated efforts on the most pervasive problems.

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