

FCSO arrests 33, files 54 charges in narcotics investigation

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After seven months of work, the Fannin County Sheriff's Office reported last Thursday that they had wrapped up a large narcotics investigation that resulted in the arrest of 33 defendants. The defendants were directly involved in drug-dealing that takes place in Fannin County and affects the residents here. After it was all said and done, 52 felony charges and two misdemeanor charges were filed against the defendants taken into custody.

Not only did the operation take drugs off the street and possibly stop future trafficking, it also helped FCSO financially. Foster reported at Monday's Commissioner's Court meeting that his department had been awarded nearly \$20,000 in seized money that was forfeited in connection with these crimes. In open court, Foster praised the efforts of his department and Bonham Police Department, who provided man-power and hours to collaborate and compare cases that ended up linking together. Foster requested Monday to give BPD \$3,000 to thank them for their time and efforts, and the commissioners approved to increase his budget by the \$19,000 that was awarded so FCSO could do just that.

"Our goal was to dismantle drug dealing groups in Fannin County and not to just make a one time bust," said Foster, adding that the undercover investigation took longer than anticipated, but the success was worth the work. The investigators kicked off the round up operation with a series of "Buy-Bust Arrests" which netted an approximate street value of \$5,000 in methamphetamine and \$2,000 in crack cocaine. FCSO is still seeking the arrests of six additional defendants.

"This operation was time consuming, but was very effective," Foster said. "At the end of it all we are hoping to see some lengthy prison sentences for some of these defendants. While we have recovered a considerable amount of illegal drugs during these arrests, the amount of drugs that may have been stopped from being transported or dealt in our county with these arrests could be much more. It certainly has given our investigators plenty of new leads and a lot more work to come."

Foster went on to say, "We have just one deputy assigned full time to narcotics work and he has been extremely busy with this operation. Bonham Police Department's cooperation and assistance was instrumental to this success. We really could not have handled such a large operation without them. Chief Bankston and his officers have been great. Everyone pitched in and made it work."