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Drugs that are dyed surface

Staff writer

TUMWATER - Narcotics detectives seized white and purple crystals of methamphetamine Wednesday at an apartment on Lake Park Drive as part of an investigation that also turned up more than 3 pounds of meth in Yakima, law enforcement officials said.

The purple methamphetamine is a new wrinkle in the manufacture of the drug; food coloring likely is added during the cooking process to give the product a distinctive appearance so customers recognize where it came from, said Yakima County Sheriff's Detective Mike Akins, who works for the drug-enforcement task force there.

"Meth is a problem no matter what color it is," he said. "But it's just a marketing scheme, I believe."

Purple or blue meth has begun appearing in the Grays Harbor County area in the past couple of months, according to Thurston County Narcotics Task Force Supervisor Lt. Loreli Thompson and Grays Harbor County Undersheriff Rick Scott.

It likely comes from Mexico by way of California, Scott said, adding that the colored meth's purity level is very high.

An investigation brought Yakima detectives to Tumwater in March when a confidential source told detectives that he or she picked up meth at the Lake Park Drive apartment and drove it to Yakima, where it was sold, court records state.

Stasy Gabriel Espinosa, 18, was arrested Wednesday in Tumwater; she was ordered held by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Espinosa has no criminal record. About 8 ounces of meth was seized.

Also Wednesday, narcotics detectives arrested Antonio Mendoza Barragan, 27, identified in court records as Espinosa's boyfriend, as part of a controlled buy in a Wal-Mart parking lot in Yakima. They also arrested three other men.

Both purple and white meth was seized during that controlled buy, Akins said.

Espinosa was arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

Mendoza Barragan was arrested on suspicion of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and conspiracy to deliver a controlled substance.

Mendoza Barragan also has an immigration hold ordering him to appear before a judge.

Jeremy Pawloski: 360-754-5465

jpawloski@theolympian.com



Capacity: 5 lb / 2.2 kg
lb/kg oz/g

226

oz g ON/TARE

Sunbeam

METAMPHETAMINE OF
SODIUM (Ecstasy)

METAMPHETAMINE OF
SODIUM (Ecstasy)

INVENTORY
Case #:
EVIDENCE
Small Evidence
Medium Evidence

ENVELOPE