Teton County Sheriff

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Sheriff Issues Statement on Federal Law Enforcement Cooperation and Recent Drug Enforcement Operations

DRIGGS, ID – In response to inquiries from municipal leadership and community members - Sheriff Clint Lemieux is providing formal clarification regarding department policy, jurisdictional boundaries, and the events surrounding recent law enforcement operations in Teton County.

The Sheriff's Office welcomes the opportunity to provide accurate information, dispel widespread speculation and misinformation, and reinforce the public trust that is essential to effective law enforcement.

"Our primary duty, first and foremost, is the safety and security of every resident and visitor in Teton County," said Sheriff Lemieux. "We focus our resources on stopping criminal activity - particularly the trafficking of dangerous narcotics into our valley. We do not enforce federal immigration law, nor do we act as federal immigration agents. However, when federal agencies operate in our jurisdiction - whether targeting child predators or taking down drug cartel operations - we maintain essential communications for officer safety and public protection."

Department Policy Regarding Federal Immigration Authorities

To provide complete clarity for local elected officials and the public, the Teton County Sheriff's Office's operational policies are as follows:

1) Teton County deputies enforce Idaho state criminal laws and county ordinances. When appropriate, deputies may also assist federal authorities in criminal investigations where state and federal laws overlap.

2) Deputies do not conduct civil immigration enforcement, carry out immigration raids, or inquire into the immigration status of individuals during routine calls for service or traffic stops.
3) The Teton County Sheriff's Office ***does not*** hold a 287(g) agreement or any formal contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to perform immigration enforcement.
4) When federal law enforcement agencies - including the Forest Service, DEA, FBI, or ICE - conduct operations within Teton County, standard agency practice requires operational deconfliction. Federal agencies coordinate with local emergency dispatch to prevent overlapping tactical operations, avoid "friendly fire" incidents, and ensure public safety. To maintain real-time situational awareness, federal teams routinely integrate operational communications with local emergency dispatch and on-duty officers.

Clarification of Recent Operations in Teton County

Media reports and social media speculation have conflated separate, independent law enforcement actions. The Sheriff provides the following factual timeline regarding these operations:

Friday, July 17: Local Cocaine Trafficking Warrant & Drug Interdiction

- Teton County investigators executed a criminal search warrant at a residence on Coyote Lane in Victor. Officers seized trafficking amounts of cocaine at the scene and arrested Melissa Mattson on felony drug charges.
- Concurrently, ICE agents were present in Teton County on an independent federal mission attempting to arrest two specific targets.
- While Teton County deputies conducted local traffic stops, federal agents independently conducted administrative enforcement under their own federal authority. Teton County deputies did not assist in or execute these administrative arrests.

Tuesday, July 21: DEA-Led Narcotics Takedown

- Teton County deputies participated in a major, multi-agency operation led by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) targeting an interstate drug trafficking network.

- Search warrants were executed simultaneously across Lincoln County (WY), Teton County (WY), and Teton County (ID), resulting in the arrest of key drug trafficking targets.
- During this federal multi-agency operation, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) personnel took some individuals into federal custody. Other individuals were taken into local custody for criminal drug trafficking offenses.

“Some people have speculated or implied that our local deputies were out conducting immigration roundups. That is not true,” Sheriff Lemieux stated. “Our deputies have been working to take drug dealers off the street and shut down local cells of interstate trafficking operations. When federal agencies operate in our backyard - especially when chasing child abusers or drug cartels - we maintain open communication so everyone goes home alive. But our local deputies remain focused on local crime and public safety.”

Public Guidance for Operational Safely

The Sheriff’s Office respects the Constitutional rights of all residents to observe public government activity. To ensure public safety during active police encounters or federal operations, the Sheriff advises community members of the following guidelines:

- Bystanders should remain at least 25 to 50 feet away from active law enforcement scenes, traffic stops, or warrant executions to give officers space to work safely.
- Members of the public have a legal right to record video in public spaces. However, observers must not step into traffic lanes, approach officers during active detentions, block police vehicles, or obstruct an officer's line of sight or movement.
- If an officer or federal agent directs onlookers to step back for safety reasons (such as potential weapon threats or traffic hazards), observers should comply immediately.

Commitment to Transparency

The Teton County Sheriff's Office thanks Mayor Muncaster and other local leaders for raising these important questions on behalf of their constituents. The Sheriff's Office remains committed to open dialogue, professional transparency, and shared focus on keeping Teton County safe from criminal threats.

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