

Wayne deputies break drug ring, impound cars - Drive-through cocaine service drew customers from all over, police say

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DETROIT ? Wayne County Sheriff's Department deputies have impounded 131 vehicles over the past week from people they say were trying to buy drugs from a drive-through cocaine ring in the city.

A total of 110 of the vehicles belonged to people from the suburbs and outstate, including as far away as Petoskey, Sheriff Warren Evans said.

"Buyers, you are now on our radar," said Detective Lt. Delman Christian of the Michigan State Police, which collaborated in the effort. "For those of you who like to make your (drug) shopping trips to the city of Detroit, it's going to get a lot more expensive for you. Buyer beware."

The owners must appear in court and pay up to \$900 in fines to get their vehicles returned under a nuisance abatement ordinance. So far, 12 vehicle owners have been arrested on outstanding felony warrants and 23 others were arrested on outstanding misdemeanors, Evans said.

The seizures were made when the cellular telephones of the members of a gang called the **Joy Boys** continued to ring after their arrests.

"We manned the telephones for a series of days pretending to be the **Joy Boys**," Evans said. "We took the calls from the customers, and the customers came to the prearranged meeting location. We seized the cars under the nuisance abatement law."

Police have used similar tactics in the past when drivers were caught soliciting prostitutes.

The seizures came as a follow-up to charges last week against 19 people who federal investigators say ran a drug ring called the **Joy Boys**, a reference to the group's work along Joy Road.

Agents from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives got the original tip and began investigating the case 14 months ago.

"We have effectively shut down one of Detroit's most lucrative cocaine distribution rings," said Valerie Goddard, special agent in charge of the Detroit ATF office.

The gang was taking in as much as \$30,000 a day selling crack and powder cocaine, Goddard said. At times, cars would be lined up for blocks awaiting delivery, she said.

The gang operated as a business, complete with eight-hour shifts and scheduled days off for its employees, investigators said.

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