Benton-Franklin gang sweep snaps 49 fugitives in Tri-Cities

Tri-City Herald

KENNEWICK—Fourty- nine fugitives in the Tri-Cities got an early Christmas holiday surprise when law enforcement officers set out on a two-day sweep. "Operation Holiday Express" targeted criminal gang fugitives who had warrants out for their arrest.

Kennewick Police Chief Ken Hohenberg said his department and the Benton-Franklin County Sheriff's Office, along with other local police forces, conducted the sweep that lasted from Thursday to Friday.

"We have 49 people who are involved in the street gang organizations," Hohenberg said Tuesday. "They have warrants."

The arrests involved 49 felons charged with federal and state crimes, including attempted murder, escape and weapons violations.

"The message we're trying to send is that we are going to maintain a high priority on these individuals who are drug dealers, and we're going to engage in criminal gang activity in the Tri-Cities," Hohenberg said. "And you're going to be more likely to see an officer on the street because innocent persons is going to be hurt, which is why we're out here to arrest people and put them in jail," Hohenberg said.

A gang sweep had been planned for Benton-Franklin counties since Jan. 1, but Hohenberg said two recent violent crimes in Kennewick prompted officials to accelerate the sweep.

No arrests have been made in the Disenchantment Court, Hohenberg said. He said the Kennewick Police Department will continue with the investigation.

"Whenever people do engage in this kind of activity it's just an act of human corruption and criminality and it's a result of that -- and this is the end result," Hohenberg said.

Cotton Hanshaw, the youthfultegafter her adopted brother and sister, and was arrested and haunted by authorities in July 2010.

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