



U.S. Department of Justice

National Drug Intelligence Center

**Request for Information**

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REQUESTOR: The Office of Senator Ron Wyden, Oregon

DATE: July 29, 2009

RFI NUMBER: 2009-183

REFERENCE: Pseudoephedrine Smurfing and Domestic Methamphetamine Production

This Request for Information (RFI) was initiated on July 23, 2009, at the request of Joel Shapiro, Counsel for Judiciary, Foreign Affairs, Immigration, Elections, Labor, Education and Nanotechnology in the Office of Senator Ron Wyden, Oregon. This RFI addresses the following request with information available to the National Drug Intelligence Center as of July 29, 2009.

**Request:** Please supply state level information that indicates where the greatest problems are with regard to pseudoephedrine smurfing and methamphetamine laboratories.

**Response:** Since late 2007, increasing numbers of individuals and criminal groups began forming organized pseudoephedrine smurfing operations. In fact, law enforcement officials from every region in the United States (Attachment 1) now report that smurfing is the primary means by which methamphetamine producers acquire pseudoephedrine. Although no national level data are available regarding smurfing operations, California appears to be the state with the greatest smurfing problem. In California, organized smurfing is fueling the current increase in Mexican drug trafficking organization superlab<sup>1</sup> activity, while a portion of the pseudoephedrine smurfed also is destined for superlabs in Mexico. Organized smurfing is also supplying the small-scale<sup>2</sup> local laboratories located throughout the country.

Based solely on national seizure data, Missouri, Tennessee, Alabama, Indiana, and Kentucky had the greatest number of methamphetamine laboratories seized in 2008, the latest full year for which data are available (Attachment 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Methamphetamine superlabs are clandestine laboratories capable of producing 10 or more pounds per production cycle.

<sup>2</sup> Small-scale methamphetamine laboratories are generally capable of producing 1 pound or less of methamphetamine per production cycle.

**Attachment 1**

Map of U.S. Cities Reporting Smurfing as the Primary Means of Pseudoephedrine Acquisition



Source: Federal, state and local law enforcement\* reporting through July 29, 2009.

\*Data are not statistically representative, or exhaustive of law enforcement officials nationwide.

**Attachment 2**

Reported Methamphetamine Laboratory Seizures, by State, 2004-2009,\* Sorted by Greatest Number of Laboratory Seizures in 2008.

| State          | 2004  | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|----------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| MISSOURI       | 1,112 | 713  | 400  | 427  | 490  | 278  |
| TENNESSEE      | 1,007 | 520  | 599  | 400  | 412  | 187  |
| ALABAMA        | 364   | 223  | 135  | 97   | 320  | 149  |
| INDIANA        | 597   | 422  | 312  | 320  | 301  | 129  |
| KENTUCKY       | 388   | 343  | 220  | 196  | 292  | 152  |
| ARKANSAS       | 601   | 319  | 273  | 218  | 275  | 106  |
| MICHIGAN       | 168   | 184  | 119  | 101  | 194  | 107  |
| ILLINOIS       | 498   | 323  | 287  | 154  | 159  | 138  |
| MISSISSIPPI    | 212   | 109  | 78   | 81   | 143  | 111  |
| CALIFORNIA     | 518   | 271  | 212  | 125  | 116  | 35   |
| IOWA           | 480   | 183  | 95   | 88   | 103  | 44   |
| NORTH CAROLINA | 241   | 174  | 88   | 70   | 90   | 43   |
| FLORIDA        | 216   | 200  | 104  | 107  | 85   | 45   |
| OHIO           | 173   | 178  | 102  | 77   | 84   | 53   |
| OKLAHOMA       | 414   | 135  | 127  | 70   | 83   | 73   |
| TEXAS          | 362   | 174  | 72   | 53   | 78   | 39   |
| KANSAS         | 213   | 126  | 54   | 39   | 66   | 25   |
| GEORGIA        | 215   | 204  | 111  | 52   | 58   | 12   |
| NEW MEXICO     | 92    | 45   | 28   | 18   | 47   | 11   |
| WEST VIRGINIA  | 102   | 102  | 62   | 32   | 37   | 21   |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | 136   | 107  | 56   | 17   | 30   | 27   |
| COLORADO       | 147   | 95   | 62   | 43   | 26   | 10   |
| WASHINGTON     | 489   | 211  | 81   | 62   | 26   | 9    |
| NORTH DAKOTA   | 64    | 38   | 9    | 7    | 16   | 4    |
| NEW YORK       | 33    | 19   | 30   | 12   | 14   | 2    |
| OREGON         | 378   | 136  | 39   | 14   | 14   | 5    |
| MINNESOTA      | 97    | 46   | 16   | 19   | 13   | 1    |
| VIRGINIA       | 65    | 46   | 18   | 15   | 13   | 8    |
| NEBRASKA       | 85    | 52   | 8    | 6    | 11   | 3    |
| PENNSYLVANIA   | 64    | 31   | 29   | 9    | 8    | 1    |
| ARIZONA        | 97    | 51   | 24   | 10   | 7    | 4    |
| IDAHO          | 29    | 20   | 16   | 13   | 7    | 3    |

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|                      |               |              |              |              |              |               |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| LOUISIANA            | 81            | 39           | 13           | 37           | 7            | 13            |
| NEVADA               | 51            | 29           | 20           | 8            | 6            | 3             |
| UTAH                 | 50            | 28           | 25           | 3            | 6            | 1             |
| WISCONSIN            | 31            | 23           | 7            |              | 6            | 1             |
| ALASKA               | 53            | 29           | 3            | 0            | 5            | 1             |
| SOUTH DAKOTA         | 12            | 11           | 3            | 5            | 5            | 1             |
| MAINE                | 3             | 3            | 3            | 0            | 2            | 0             |
| MARYLAND             | 1             | 3            | 0            | 0            | 1            | 0             |
| MONTANA              | 39            | 11           | 7            | 3            | 1            | 0             |
| NEW JERSEY           | 2             | 3            | 5            | 1            | 1            | 0             |
| WYOMING              | 19            | 9            | 4            | 2            | 1            | 0             |
| CONNECTICUT          | 0             | 3            | 3            | 0            | 0            | 0             |
| DELAWARE             | 3             | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0             |
| DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 1             | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0             |
| HAWAII               | 10            | 9            | 4            | 0            | 0            | 0             |
| MASSACHUSETTS        | 1             | 4            | 1            | 1            | 0            | 0             |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE        | 2             | 6            | 2            | 1            | 0            | 0             |
| RHODE ISLAND         | 0             | 0            | 1            |              | 0            | 0             |
| VERMONT              | 1             | 1            | 0            | 1            | 0            | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>10,017</b> | <b>6,011</b> | <b>3,967</b> | <b>3,014</b> | <b>3,659</b> | <b>1,855*</b> |

Source: National Seizure System, run date July 24, 2009.

\*Preliminary data