



SHERIFF
MIKE PRENDERGAST



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2017

For more information, contact:

Lindsay Blair,
Community Affairs Specialist & Public Information
(352) 341-7460

Largest Heroin Bust in Citrus County

Early Friday morning, the Citrus County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team assisted narcotics detectives with our Tactical Impact Unit in serving a search warrant at 4811 W Old Citrus Road in Lecanto, off Hwy 44. Through investigation, it was discovered the residents of the home sell illegal drugs. After the SWAT Team secured the occupants of the home, detectives conducted a search and continued their drug investigation.

In addition to cocaine, a quarter ounce of methamphetamine, marijuana, approximately \$3,500 cash, and other controlled substances, the search also revealed more than 50 grams of heroin. This is a significant amount of the dangerous drug. In part, because this large amount of heroin carries a 25-year minimum sentence if convicted, and has a street value of over \$10,000. For perspective - the drug trafficking statute only requires a weight over 4 grams to carry a mandatory minimum sentence. Again - detectives located more than 50 grams!

The investigation resulted in three arrests on various drug charges. The two main suspects, Kelli Helms and Joseph Evans, were arrested for trafficking heroin and other drug charges listed below. The Department of Children & Families responded to shelter the children located in the home.

“I can't say enough of how extremely proud I am of our Tactical Impact Unit,” said Sheriff Mike Prendergast. “These outcomes come after months of hard undercover investigative work and it does not go unnoticed. If you are selling drugs, and you think my team doesn't know about you – believe me, they do. It's just a matter of time before we find another place for you to live. We hope you like jail bars.”



CITRUS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

A Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

**SHERIFF
MIKE PRENDERGAST**



Since Sheriff Prendergast took office in January, the Narcotics Unit has conducted many drug investigations resulting in search warrants and the arrests of many individuals. In the beginning of the year, our agency had the largest single investigation seizure of crystal methamphetamine and today, we can now add the biggest heroin seizure.

Charges:

Joseph Evans, 31, of Lecanto: Trafficking in Heroin, Possession of Methamphetamine, Possession of Cocaine, Possession of Paraphernalia, Possession of Ammunition by Convicted Felon, and Violation of Probation

Kelli Helms, 32, of Lecanto: Trafficking in Heroin, Possession of Cocaine, and Possession of Paraphernalia

Rhonda Atwood, 54, of Lecanto: Possession of Methamphetamine, Possession of Cannabis Wax, Possession of Hydrocodone, Possession of Marijuana under 20 grams, and Possession of Possession of Paraphernalia