

Sheriff Hagaman Weighs in on '09 Narcotics Stats

Written by Adam Hicks
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Watauga County Sheriff Len Hagaman weighed in on the 2009 narcotics statistics that were released this morning.

As previously reported, both the number of arrests and charges increased from 2008 to 2009. 128 people were arrested on 732 charges in '09 compared to 91 arrests on 408 charges in '08.

Hagaman said he believes this number is due to hard police work and partnerships with other agencies.

Hagaman explained, "Vigilance, particularly from patrol because that leads to tie-ins to larger investigations. The partnership we've had over the past year with the Boone Police in particular, and the other agencies like Blowing Rock, Seven Devils and Beech Mountain. We've just formed these partnerships that have really paid off."

According to the statistics, 23,794 tablets of prescription medication were seized in 2009. Sheriff Hagaman says prescription medication abuse seems to be a growing trend in the region.

Hagaman said, "I think it's also becoming very clear that prescription medication abuse, the diversion and the doctor shopping is unfortunately rising to be our number one drug problem."

Hagaman said a joint meeting was held with members of the Watauga County Sheriff's Office, a representative from the DEA, doctors, and pharmacists to try and remedy the prescription drug issue in Watauga. GoBlueRidge.net have more details about this meeting soon.