

Two Charged in Watauga Heroin Sweep

Written by Steve Frank
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Tuesday, Narcotics Detectives from the Watauga County Sheriff's Office and Boone Police Department conducted two joint undercover operations, seizing 2.2 grams of Heroin. The arrests were part of a joint investigation by both agencies into the sell and distribution of Heroin in Watauga County. The Heroin had an estimated street value of over \$1,000. Cody Michael Schumann, 23, of 3210 Kellersville Road, Banner Elk, was charged with PWIMSD Schedule I Heroin and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. Schumann was taken to the Watauga County Detention Center in lieu of a \$15,000 secured bond. Schumann is scheduled to appear in District Court on March 18, 2014. Jacob Tyler Trachtenberg, 25, of 142 Berry Road, Banner Elk, was charged with PWIMSD Schedule I Heroin, Conspiracy to Sell/Deliver Schedule I Heroin, and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. Trachtenberg was taken to the Watauga County Detention Center in lieu of a \$10,000 secured bond. Trachtenberg is scheduled to appear in District Court on March 18, 2014.

Watauga County Sheriff, Len Hagaman said, "It is indeed unfortunate that we are seeing the rise of heroin use here in Watauga County. This is mirroring regional information from our sister law enforcement agencies, who are also seeing increases in heroin use." The increase, he said, "is due to prescription drug users needing a less expensive replacement for their increasingly expensive drugs and dealers' aggressive marketing techniques." What's happened, he said, "is the people who sell this product have made it appear safer, made it less expensive, and they give you the misconception that it's less harmful if you smoke it." Hagaman quoted a recent U.S. Department of Justice report noting that authorities estimated that Mexican heroin production increased 342 percent from 2004-2008. Heroin is an opiate drug that is synthesized from morphine, a naturally occurring substance extracted from the seed pod of the Asian opium poppy plant according to the National Institute On Drug Abuse, and is usually grown Asia or Mexico. Heroin usually appears as a white or brown powder or as a black sticky substance, known as "black tar heroin." I think what's driving people over to heroin is just the cost of the pills, more than anything else right now. The price of illegal prescription pain pills at \$30 to \$80 per pill, but black tar heroin can be found for \$10 per dose."