



Kansas Bureau of Investigation

Larry Welch
Director

Paul Morrison
Attorney General

Media Release January 25, 2007

KBI Director Larry Welch announced today that the final tabulation of meth labs seized by Kansas law enforcement in calendar year 2006 has been completed.

Director Welch advised that Kansas law enforcement seized 168 meth labs last year across the state, in the first full year of effect of the Sheriff Matt Samuels Chemical Control Act passed by the Kansas Legislature in 2005.

The director explained that the 168 seizures represent a dramatic reduction of 80 percent from the peak year of meth lab seizures in Kansas in 2001 (846) and a 73 percent reduction in meth lab seizures in the state from 2004 (630), the last year before passage of the Matt Samuels Act.

Welch attributed the dramatic decrease in meth lab seizures in very large part to the Sheriff Matt Samuels Chemical Control Act of 2005 and thanked the Kansas Legislature for the law. He also commended the cooperation of Kansas pharmacists and the patience and understanding of Kansas consumers which contributed to the success of the legislative measure.

Sheriff Matt Samuels was shot and killed on January 19, 2005, as he entered a rural Greenwood County home which, unbeknownst to the sheriff, housed an operational meth lab.

The legislation carrying the sheriff's name received broad bipartisan support in the Kansas Legislature and was followed, in 2006, with similar federal legislation by the U.S. Congress.

The law restricts public access to ephedrine and pseudoephedrine (precursors in the manufacture of methamphetamine) which are found in common over-the-counter cold and asthma tablet-form medicines. Registration and identification at the time of purchase are required of purchasers, even though a prescription is not required. Those cold and asthma remedies are now placed behind pharmacy counters rather than on more public shelves and counters.

Welch noted that 168 meth labs are still too many and that meth labs continue to present dangers for Kansas citizens and Kansas law enforcement.

Nonetheless, he believes the reduction in seizures will permit Kansas law enforcement, in general, and the KBI, in particular, to redirect much of their precious resources toward investigation of the importation and trafficking of methamphetamine and away from locally manufactured methamphetamine.

Welch has always expressed the opinion that 80 percent, or more, of methamphetamine in Kansas was of foreign origin, mostly Mexican, rather than locally manufactured, although meth labs require an inordinate amount of law enforcement manpower, time and resources.

Contact information:

Kyle G. Smith
Deputy Director
Kansas Bureau of Investigation
1620 S.W. Tyler
Topeka, KS 66612
785.296.8211