Bureau of Narcotics

The Essex County Sheriff’s Bureau of Narcotics (SBON) is the second oldest law enforcement unit of its type in New Jersey. Only the Newark Police Department’s Narcotics Bureau has more longevity.

The SBON was created to be the forefront of county law enforcement’s efforts to combat the illicit narcotics trade by identifying, investigating and apprehending violators of the state’s narcotic laws, whose actions adversely affect the quality of life of the citizens of Essex County and are directly related to increase in violent crime. In addition, the SBON has always provided assistance to all local police departments in their ongoing war on drugs.

The Bureau of Narcotics is staffed by police professionals who have received training in narcotics investigations from, among other law enforcement organizations, the New Jersey State Police, the Division of Criminal Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Responding to community complaints regarding drug trafficking, the Bureau of Narcotics annually conducts undercover “buy and bust” and surveillance operations throughout Essex County. Many of these operations are augmented and supported by skilled teams of narcotics-detecting K-9’s and their handlers.

While seizing large quantities of narcotics contraband each year, the SBON, often in conjunction with the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office and the DEA, has been extremely successful in urban and suburban neighborhoods, at schools and at business facilities in eradicating all levels of narcotics trafficking. The SBON also provides assistance in the form of personnel, investigative and technical expertise, and operational funding to all Essex County municipal police departments and to state and federal law enforcement task forces.

Detectives from the Bureau of Narcotics regularly train officers from municipal police departments in undercover drug operations and surveillance. The knowledge gained by the police departments has proven to be invaluable in recognizing and disrupting the sale of illegal narcotics in our communities.

During a three-month venture with the Orange Police Department, called the “Orange Safe Streets Initiative,” Orange police officers worked alongside SBON detectives and executed more than 100 drug arrests. Similar initiatives have been conducted with the North Caldwell, West Caldwell, Roseland and Essex Fells police departments.

In order to maintain an open dialogue with Essex County residents, SBON detectives regularly participate in neighborhood civic meetings and provide effective crime prevention and substance abuse advice to community organizations.

Since Essex County is a major global transportation hub, illegal drug traffickers will continue to seek the quickest, easiest and safest route to our door. In their efforts to combat this menace, the Bureau of Narcotics has apprehended well over 10,000 drug dealers, resulting in nearly 40,000 criminal charges over the past decade. SBON detectives also target those who buy drugs in Essex County. A statistical analysis of drug buyer arrests reveals that nearly 25% of the buyers come into Essex County from other parts of New Jersey and states as far away as Virginia and Georgia.

During this same ten-year period, SBON detectives seized more than $10 million in heroin, cocaine, marijuana, date rape drugs and other controlled dangerous substances. SBON officers have confiscated hundreds upon hundreds of weapons, including illegal assault weapons. In shutting down illegal drug manufacturing, processing, distribution and sales operations, SBON detectives have also seized hundreds of thousands of dollars in drug contaminated currency and other assets, including vehicles and personal property, from narcotics traffickers which the courts have declared forfeit.

Recouped illegal drug monies and other assets are placed into the public treasury.