

# Police focus on curbing meth use

By JOSH FUNK  
Senior staff writer

An explosion in the methamphetamine trade has forced Lincoln-area law enforcement agencies to focus their efforts on the drug.

A cheap price, relatively easy manufacturing and a lasting high have made the drug popular across the state and in Lincoln.

During the past three to four years Lincoln's methamphetamine trade has dramatically increased, Lincoln Police Narcotics Capt. Duane Bullock said.

"We're not talking about small amounts of meth," Bullock said. "We're talking pounds."

University police also have seen an increase in the use of the drug, Sgt. Mylo Bushing said.

"Last year we had two or three cases (involving methamphetamine)," Bushing said. "Before that we had not had any cases for a few years."

Multi-jurisdictional narcotics task forces have been working statewide to seize illegal narcotics and impede the drug trade.

In 1996 those task forces seized 67,912 grams (about 2,395 pounds) of methamphetamine, according to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice's annual report for 1997.

In 1995 those same task forces seized 15,543 grams (about 548 pounds), and in 1994 they seized 11,150 grams (about 393 pounds).

In 1993 there were 922 grams (about 32 pounds) of methamphetamine seized, the annual report said.

Though methamphetamines are the biggest problem, other drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and crack cocaine also are problems.

Incidents involving other drugs have not decreased in Lincoln, but the methamphetamine trade has grown

beyond other narcotics, Bullock said. "Personally, I think Lincoln is a lot better off than other cities our size," Griess said. "There are a lot of good programs in the community."

Interstate 80 also brings large amounts of drugs through the area.

"I-80 is a pipeline of transportation, and many dealers use it to transport drugs," Griess said.

Police agencies have formed narcotics task forces to address the growing problems of drug manufacturing, trade and trafficking in Lincoln and across the country.

"The task forces promote statewide and national cooperation (in law enforcement)," Bullock said.

The task force cooperation has helped narcotics officers make arrests of suppliers and distributors across their state or even cross-country. Bullock cited drug arrests the LPD has made in California and Arizona as proof of task force effectiveness.

Because of the interstate transport of drugs and complex organization, Bullock said, many drug investigations and subsequent prosecutions become federal cases.

Fortunately Lincoln's drug problem does not include the widespread manufacturing of drugs because most are available from other sources, Bullock said.

"Most of our meth comes from Mexico," Bullock said. "But a lot of it originated in the middle of the state."

Production centers have appeared in Grand Island, Kearney and other parts of Nebraska. Bullock said many methamphetamine labs are in Missouri, so there is no need for production in Lincoln.

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant of the central nervous system that triggers the release of dopamine, a feel-good chemical critical to normal brain function, said Tophers Hansen, director of development and

legal counsel for CenterPointe substance abuse center, 1000 S. 13th St.

"It is much easier to become dependent to meth in a short amount of time than other drugs," Hansen said.

Methamphetamine is similar to amphetamines, but it produces a stronger effect on the brain.

Methamphetamine is an off-white or yellowish-colored, odorless and bitter-tasting crystalline powder soluble in water or alcohol.

The drug can be smoked, injected intravenously, snorted or taken orally.

Its effects last eight to 24 hours longer than cocaine.

Methamphetamine is made from highly toxic chemicals such as red phosphorous, ephedrine, iodine and lye in dangerous home labs, according to information from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

These labs can be almost anywhere — a house, motel room or even the trunk of a car — which makes detection difficult for police.

The production of the drug is highly volatile, and labs can easily explode, according to the department.

Bullock said that in his 20 years of narcotics experience he has seen the drug become more potent and addictive since its beginnings.

Treatment centers in Lincoln also have seen an increase in the number of methamphetamine addictions in recent years, Hansen said.

And enforcement alone is not enough to affect the drug trade, Griess said. Education needs to be involved too.

Community programs such as D.A.R.E. and Mad Dads and schools augment the police enforcement by teaching children not to take drugs.

Bullock said such community involvement is important in reducing the drug trade.

"We have to work on all different areas of the trade to make an effect."



## Charge filed in car wash

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey has decided to file a charge against the UNL student involved in a fatal car wreck Thursday morning.

Lacey said Monday that a charge of misdemeanor motor vehicle homicide would be filed against University of Nebraska-Lincoln sophomore Chad Reade.

A 68-year-old Lincoln man was killed just before 6 a.m. Thursday when Reade's Dodge Dakota crossed the center line of Cornhusker Highway just east of 70th Street, according to police reports.

The collision completely crushed the front end of Or Gazarov's Mercury Sable.

Gazarov, an immigrant from Armenia, is survived by his wife, two adult sons and two granddaughters, who all live in Lincoln.

Reade and two friends riding in the truck sustained minor injuries in the crash, but they did not require hospitalization.

Lacey said Monday the charge would be filed against Reade in Lancaster County Court later this week.

the hallways of Harper Residence Hall was spotted and cited by University Police Saturday morning.

Two Community Service Officers saw the 18-year-old freshman drinking from a beer can as they were making their rounds of the 10th floor of Harper at 1:45 a.m., University Police Sgt. Mylo Bushing said.

When a university police officer arrived, the student consented to have his room searched, but no more beer was found.

The student was cited for being a minor in possession of alcohol.

## Student caught drinking

Another student was cited for an alcohol violation after he was caught drinking a beer outside Abel Residence Hall Saturday morning.

A CSO patrolling the outside of the building around 2:40 a.m. saw a student drink from a beer can that had been sitting on the ledge above the door, Bushing said.

When the CSO approached the student he denied that the beer was his, but the officer could smell alcohol on the 19-year-old student. He was cited for possessing alcohol.

## Two found with alcohol

Two freshmen were cited for drinking alcohol in their Schramm Residence Hall room after a CSO saw the beer through their open door Saturday morning.

A CSO making his rounds of the fourth floor at 2:45 a.m. saw beer cans lying in plain view inside one of the dorm rooms, Bushing said.

When the officer questioned the two freshmen inside, ages 18 and 19, they admitted drinking the beer and showed the officer another can in the refrigerator.

They were both cited for possessing alcohol.

## Student arrested

A student who was caught breaking into cars was arrested by university police on an outstanding warrant Sunday.

Police patrolling the parking lot at 1820 R St. saw the 20-year-old student looking into the back of cars and trying to open doors, Bushing said.

When police questioned him around 4 a.m. he was holding stolen property in his hands and then started to run.

Police pursued the suspect on foot to 2232 R St. where they caught up with him.

An ID check revealed an outstanding warrant from Lincoln police for maintaining a disorderly house.

The suspect was arrested on the warrant and charged with stealing from cars and fleeing to avoid arrest.

## Police enforce speed limits

As a reminder to motorists to slow down, Lincoln police began an intense enforcement of the speed limit in school zones last week.

In one week, police issued 1,315 citations, 518 of which were warnings, Lincoln Police Sgt. Dave Harnly said.

Of the 797 tickets written, 52 were for violations in excess of 21 miles per hour over the limit. These carry a \$400 fine.

Police will be enforcing school-zone speed limits again this week concentrating their efforts around the five Lincoln high schools.

## Man hurt in knife fight

One man was hurt badly in a fight Monday morning even though his friends gave him a knife to even the odds.

The argument began just after midnight when one man's ex-roommate came to the apartment where the victim was staying, Lincoln Police Sgt. Terry Sherrill said.

When they started arguing at the door, the other people in the apartment told them to take their dispute outside, but they gave the victim a knife before he went out because his ex-roommate had one.

The argument escalated into a knife fight once the two men were out on the lawn.

The victim sustained bruises around the face and head and self-defense knife wounds on his hands and forearms.

Police are still looking for the man suspected of the assault.

## Student cited for alcohol

A freshman drinking a beer in

Compiled by senior staff writer Josh Funk

## CORRECTION

A story in Thursday's Daily Nebraskan about a World War II veteran incorrectly implied the location of Pointe du Hoc, a landmark near Omaha Beach in Normandy, France. The landmark is about 5 miles inland.

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