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## THE NAVAJO NATION

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# Navajo police seize 135 pounds of pot, two kilos of coke, three pickup loads of fireworks in weekend traffics stops

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo police seized 135 pounds of marijuana, two kilos of cocaine, a vehicle and three pickup loads of illegal fireworks in traffic stops and at checkpoints over the holiday weekend.



*Alvin Dooline, a Window Rock High School summer student worker at the Window Rock Fire Department, inventories all of the illegal fireworks confiscated on Monday by Navajo police. Two more similar pickup loads have been confiscated and destroyed. Beginning tomorrow, those in possession will be cited.*

The drug confiscations resulted in the arrest of seven individuals.

Samson Cowboy, director of the Navajo Division of Public Safety, said the arrests came from highway checkpoints established in the seven Navajo police districts over the holiday weekend.

Because so many officers are deployed in the field, no information on locations or names of those arrested were made available Monday. Mr. Cowboy said complete information will be available after the Fourth of July.

A total of 89 individuals were arrested for DWI. A total of 1,071 traffic citations were issued. Twenty individuals were arrested on outstanding warrants and one was arrested on a federal warrant. Domestic violence resulted in 28 arrests. Five people were arrested for methamphetamine possession.

There were 17 reported vehicle accidents, four accidents with injuries and one vehicular-related fatality.

Twenty-two juvenile arrests and 11 fire calls were made.

Sgt. Dempsey Harvey said the main goal in the confiscation of fireworks is to prevent fires, and enforce Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr.'s, executive order fire restrictions that went into effect last month. The Navajo Nation has battled more than a dozen fires in the last month. The Navajo Mountain fire continues to burn although it is considered 60 percent contained.

As of Tuesday, people possessing fireworks will be cited, Sgt. Harvey said.

"We've handed out 5,500 pamphlets that warn of the dangers and the law," he said. "The thing I'm looking at is the vendors will be going into sale mode and fireworks will be 50 percent off tomorrow."

He said the punishment up through Monday was confiscation of fireworks and the financial loss of whatever individuals paid for them. He said people have asked to be escorted back to vendors to get their money back. That request is denied by police.

"They know it's illegal," Sgt. Harvey said. "Some people spend between \$300 and \$500 on fireworks."

Once fireworks are confiscated, they are inventoried and destroyed by being dissolved in water and then incinerated.

Sgt. Harvey said the Navajo Fire Department is responding to calls of fireworks in residential areas. If residents give fire department personnel a hard time, he said, police officers will be called. He said some parents ask police officers to talk to their children about the hazards of fireworks.

Two structure fires were reported Sunday as a result of fireworks, he said.

"It's illegal, Period," said Johnny Johnson, Navajo Nation Emergency Management Operations Center coordinator.

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