

Four arrested in raid on lab

FACTORYVILLE, Pa. (UPI) — Federal agents arrested four men and seized \$300,000 worth of methamphetamine in a raid on a Wyoming County farmhouse described as one of "largest, longest-running" drug labs in Pennsylvania.

FBI agents said Wednesday the drug lab, located less than a mile from Lackawanna Trail High School, was capable of making up to \$1 million worth of methamphetamine or "speed" each month.

The lab "represents one of the largest, longest-running laboratories known to exist in Pennsylvania," said Jerry Thornton, FBI spokesman in Philadelphia.

A 23-member FBI special weapons and tactics team from Philadelphia burst into farmhouse on Tunnel Hill Road about 7:45 p.m. Tuesday and

arrested the four men without incident.

The FBI identified the suspects as Robert E. Hofner, 35, and Jimmy Robinson, 36, both of Philadelphia; Gerald Cohen, 48, Lindenwood, N.J., and John Conway, 36, a fugitive from Mississippi living in the Philadelphia area.

State police arrested a fifth man — John Nystrand Jr., 26, of Wyalusing, Bradford County — at a Ramada Inn in nearby Chinchilla, Lackawanna County.

Bob Hess, FBI spokesman in Scranton, identified Nystrand as a "distributor" of methamphetamine.

Hess said Nystrand allegedly purchased one pound of speed from an undercover agent for \$12,000 and attempted to sell the agent a .45-caliber Mach 10 submachine gun with a silencer.

In addition to about seven pounds of finished methamphetamine with a street value of about \$300,000, authorities confiscated equipment and chemicals used in the manufacture of the drug, the FBI said.

A six-month investigation by FBI and federal Drug Enforcement Administration agents determined the lab had been making methamphetamine for five years — the last 15 months at the farmhouse north of Factoryville, said Thornton.

Hofner, Cohen and Robinson were arraigned on charges of the manufacture of methamphetamine, possession and conspiracy before U.S. Magistrate Joseph F. Cimini in Scranton, who set bail at \$25,000 each.

Nystrand was arraigned on similar federal charges before U.S. Magistrate Raymond Durkin in Wilkes-Barre.

Nystrand also was arraigned on state charges of possession of methamphetamine with the intent to deliver before Wyoming County District Magistrate Marion Robinson and released him on \$5,000 bail.

Hess said Conway was returned to Mississippi, where he was an escapee from a state prison, and was not formally charged.

FBI agents from the Philadelphia and Scranton offices were assisted in the raid by DEA agents and state police.

Aide received big surprise

WAUKESHA, Wis. (UPI) — The young aide at the Social Services Department asked a pregnant young woman applying for additional welfare aid her name, address and income.

And then a more important question:

"Who is the father?"

The pregnant woman named the case aide's husband.

It was a shock to both.

The pregnant woman's case later was transferred to another aide, but welfare officials said the first aide began harassing the recipient with telephone calls. That's a violation of the confidentiality of welfare files.

When officials discovered what was happening, they fired the aide.

After the Milwaukee Journal inquired about the case — which occurred about two months ago — an official of the department confirmed the pregnant woman had received the benefits she requested.

Man is killed

PITTSBURGH (UPI) — Francis W. Wilson, 54, of the city's Brookline section, was killed Wednesday night when his car struck a pole along West Carson Street.

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