

BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MEDIA RELEASE

**PERRY L. RENIFF
SHERIFF-CORONER**



DATE : 8/19/09
RELEASED BY : Sgt. Steve Collins
CONTACT # : 538-7389

On 8/18/09 the Butte County Sheriff's Marijuana Unit along with Sheriff's Deputies raided two marijuana gardens. The first garden was in the Forest Ranch area off of Garland Road. Deputies entered the marijuana garden area and waited for the suspect(s) to come tend the marijuana plants. At about 9:00 A.M. a Hispanic male adult later identified as Marco Antonio Martinez, 23 years old, entered the marijuana plants and was confronted by Sheriff's deputies. Martinez attempted to flee but was stopped when a Taser deployment incapacitated him. Martinez was found in possession of a loaded .22 caliber semi-automatic handgun. Martinez was taken into custody without further incident. Deputies began searching the remainder of the trails and found another Hispanic male subject in the camp area. The Hispanic male subject fled down the steep terrain and evaded arrest. Deputies eradicated 3,576 marijuana plants from this garden. The estimated street value would have been \$14,304,000. Martinez was determined to be an illegal alien. Martinez was booked into the Butte County Jail on charges of Cultivation of Marijuana, Sales of Marijuana and Armed in the Commission of a Felony. Bail was set at \$115,000.00

After completing the first marijuana garden Sheriff's deputies were inserted into another marijuana garden that was located near Bear Lake in the Big Chico Creek Canyon. Deputies found numerous plots of marijuana plants that ranged from 1-3 feet tall. No suspect(s) were located inside the garden or camp area. Two other deputies landed the Sheriff's helicopter on top of the hill near a house and a short time later two Hispanic adult males came walking up a trail towards the house. The two Hispanic males were identified as Martin Salcedo-Orozco, age 46, and Ramon Bejinez-Castenada, age 50. It is believed that Salcedo and Bejinez are illegal aliens. The trail Salcedo and Bejinez were found

walking on led down to the camp area and on into the marijuana garden. Salcedo and Bejinez were found dressed in camouflage clothes and had inconsistent stories about what they were doing and where they were coming from. Deputies eradicated 1,902 marijuana plants from that marijuana garden. The estimated street value would have been \$7,608,000. Salcedo and Bejinez were booked into the Butte County Jail on charges of Cultivation of Marijuana and Sales of Marijuana with a bail of \$100,000.00

In total 5,478 marijuana plants were eradicated and three suspects were arrested.

Anyone with information about suspicious activity regarding illegal marijuana activity is encouraged to contact the Butte County Sheriff's Marijuana Unit at 538-7389. You can remain anonymous.









