

# **BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MEDIA RELEASE**

**PERRY L. RENIFF  
SHERIFF-CORONER**



**DATE** : 8/28/09  
**RELEASED BY** : Sgt. Steve Collins  
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On Monday 8/24/09 the Butte County Sheriff's Marijuana Unit raided an illegal marijuana garden in the area of Highway 70 and 4 Trees road. Upon entering the garden area Investigators found a loaded .22 caliber semiautomatic handgun. No suspect(s) were located in this garden however a camp and kitchen area was located and appeared to be recently used. Investigators eradicated 1,430 marijuana plants from this garden. It appeared that many marijuana plants had already been harvested prior to this raid.

On Tuesday 8/25/09 a search warrant and raid was conducted in the Feather Falls area for an illegal marijuana garden. Department of Fish and Game assisted the Sheriff's Office during this raid. During the service of the search warrant Investigators contacted Ira Geist, age 57. Geist was found inside a travel trailer with multiple loaded firearms. Investigators learned that Geist was prohibited from possessing firearms so he was taken into custody and transported to the Butte County Jail where he was booked for Felon in Possession of a Firearm and Felon in Possession of Ammunition. His bail was set at \$30,000.00. It appeared that Geist had no knowledge of the illegal marijuana grow nearby. Investigators then entered the marijuana garden and attempted to apprehend four Hispanic male suspects but the suspects fled and disappeared into the brush. Investigators found that a lot of the marijuana plots had already been harvested and recently been replanted. Investigators eradicated 2,779 marijuana plants from this garden.

On Thursday 8/27/09 members of the Butte County Sheriff's Marijuana Unit along with members from the Department of Fish and Game raided an illegal marijuana garden located in the Milsap Bar area of the Plumas National Forest. Investigators were able to apprehend one Mexican National male identified as Desiderio Gaitan-Rodriguez, age 22

**from Michoacan, Mexico. Gaitan was determined to be an illegal alien. Gaitan was taken into custody inside a tent that was in the same area as the kitchen area. Inside the tent with Gaitan was an unloaded 9mm semiautomatic handgun. A second unidentified Hispanic male suspect fled from investigators and escaped apprehension. Investigators found notes written down that indicated at least 58 pounds of marijuana had been harvested from this garden prior to this raid. Investigators eradicated 1,831 marijuana plants that were very close to being harvested. The plants ranged from three to seven feet in height. Gaitan was booked into the Butte County Jail on charges of Cultivation of Marijuana, Possession of Marijuana for Sale and Being Armed in the Commission of a Felony. Bail was set at \$105,000.00.**







