



NEWS

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LOCAL NARCOTICS TASK FORCE IS HONORED

JACKSONVILLE — The Tri-County Narcotics Task Force is being honored with a 2006 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Award for going above and beyond the call of duty by working smarter, reducing crime, and in the process saving the state more than \$300,000.

The Northeast Florida task force combined the efforts of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to combat drug cartels operating beyond any single agency's jurisdiction and resources. Fourteen agents from the St. Johns, Flagler and Putnam County Sheriffs' Departments, the St. Augustine and Palatka Police Departments, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement joined to identify and dismantle organized crime groups.

As a result, the task force disrupted 10 drug trafficking organizations, arrested 66 subjects, seized \$4.5 million worth of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, designer drugs, money and vehicles, and put an active, violent, multi-state drug ring out of business.

The team effort, dubbed "Operation Hart Attack," led investigators to a cocaine trafficking organization headed by John Randall "Randy" Hartline, 55, a St. Augustine resident with a reputation for violence. He had eluded law enforcement attempts to apprehend him for 25 years, had been implicated in at least one homicide, and had utilized threat and intimidation to control crime organization members and potential witnesses.

The investigation also led to drug operations in Orlando, California, and North Carolina where the task force worked with authorities to seize a large shipment of high grade marijuana. North Carolina authorities subsequently arrested three suspects and uncovered one of the largest and most sophisticated indoor marijuana growing operations in recent North Carolina history. The investigation brought to a close 20 years of this group's involvement in the narcotics business.

The Tri-County Narcotics Task Force has developed a reputation as one of the best in the state at maintaining a cohesive group of local and state agents to routinely deliver the big case.

"This effort resulted from better cooperation between state and federal governments providing the tools local law enforcement agencies need to allow them to work together to bring the bad guys to justice," said Dominic M. Calabro, President & CEO of Florida TaxWatch. "We commend the hardworking members of the Task Force for their diligence and fortitude in bringing this case and the criminal web it was a part of, to final justice.

FDLE Assistant Commissioner Scotty Sanderson said, "All the agencies involved in this investigation are to be commended. Their disruption and dismantling of this drug trafficking organization shows the power of law enforcement teamwork. Cocaine is a killer. We have strong desire to rid the state of this dangerous drug."

The task force is one of 17 state agencies and individual state employees on the First Coast recognized by the Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards for cost savings in the course of their jobs. The awards program is a major government improvement initiative sponsored by Florida TaxWatch, The Florida Council of 100 and the State of Florida. Started by the late A.D. and J.E. Davis, founders of Jacksonville's Winn-Dixie grocery chain, it is in its 18th year.

The 2006 awards competition honored 555 winners across Florida for innovations and productivity improvements worth \$340 million in cost savings, cost avoidances and increased revenue for state government. Since 1989, more than 12,000 individuals, teams, work units, and partnerships have been honored for saving the state \$5.3 billion.

Other area award winners include:

► Donna Danson, Florida Road Ranger Service Patrol, who developed emergency response contracts that helped motorists on over 300 miles of I-10 and I-75 interstate highways before, during, and after the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes with an estimated savings of \$10,000 per event, and

► The Duval County Center for Health Policy Research (DCHD) for assembling a 15-member, volunteer advisory committee from scientific and community-based organizations to address reducing infant mortality. They recommended a systematic evaluation of local interventions to reduce poor birth outcomes including infant mortality. Based on their recommendation, the DCHD and the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition developed and submitted a proposal to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which awarded the evaluation program \$187,000.

A luncheon honoring all of the area winners will be held Monday (June 12) at the Downtown Rotary Club meeting at the Omni Hotel in Jacksonville. The complete list of winners can be viewed at www.floridatxwatch.org.

[Click Here to View the 2006 Prudential Financial Davis Productivity Awards magazine](#)



**SAFO members who spearheaded
Operation Hart Attack**

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