



Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

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News Release

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Elaborate Marijuana Operation Busted at Fresno Rental Home

50 year old Jesus Nava Rodriguez has been booked into the Fresno County Jail. He faces felony charges of marijuana cultivation, intent to sell marijuana and stealing electricity. Rodriguez also faces other misdemeanors and had outstanding bench warrants. His bail has been set at \$147,000.

On Tuesday, members of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program (HIDTA) served a search warrant at a home on the 4600 block of W. Pine Ave. in Fresno. Once officers entered the house, the suspect, Jesus Rodriguez, ran upstairs. Officers later found him hiding in a bathtub, where he used a piece of plywood to cover himself. Several rooms throughout the house were filled with marijuana plants ranging in size from one foot tall to five feet tall. A total of 939 marijuana plants were being grown illegally. Each plant is estimated to yield a half pound of processed marijuana. At \$1,400 a pound, these plants could generate approximately \$700,000 in street sales. A small amount of methamphetamine was also located inside the house.

The rental home featured an elaborate lighting, water and air filtration system. Investigators also discovered Rodriguez had bypassed the home's electrical meter in order to avoid paying thousands of dollars in electrical charges.

HIDTA is comprised of members from several federal, state and local agencies. These include, but are not limited to the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol, Fresno Police Department, Tulare County Sheriff's Office, Homeland Security Investigations, California Department of Justice and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Under the provisions of California's Proposition 64, adults 21 and older may legally grow up to six marijuana plants inside a home, possess one ounce of marijuana and possess eight grams of concentrated marijuana. However, it is illegal to use in public, be under the influence while driving or possess on school grounds. Only licensed businesses will be permitted to sell marijuana for recreational use.

Marijuana use and cultivation remains illegal under federal law.

Fresno County enforces a strict ban on all cannabis cultivation where more than six plants are present. Violations could result in several consequences:

- 1. Growers can be arrested.**
- 2. Growers can face heavy fines starting at \$1,000 per plant.**
- 3. Property owners, including family members, can be fined too.**
- 4. Prop. 215/SB 420 compliance will not stop enforcement.**
- 5. Additional fines, interest, legal fees and costs of abatement can be charged.**
- 6. County can place lien on property for unpaid fines.**

The Sheriff's Office takes all tips seriously and encourages the public to report suspected marijuana grow sites. If you are aware of any type of illegal drug activity, report it anonymously by calling the Narcotics Hotline at 1-800-660-1086 or Email:

drugtip@fresnosheriff.org