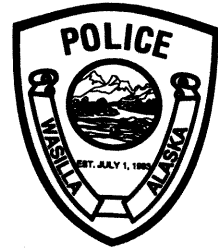




WASILLA POLICE DEPARTMENT


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Information Memo 95-15

DATE: 4-1-95

TO: Wasilla City Council

THRU: John Stein, Mayor 

FROM: Irl T. Stambaugh,  Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Drug Grant

The coordinator and Supervisor of the State of Alaska Drug Enforcement unit has been in contact with the department and has requested that an officer from the Police department be assigned to the Mat-Su narcotics unit. Funding for the position is available (upon acceptance of the grant) from the State of Alaska. Salary will be paid through a combination of grant money and seizure funds, if seizure funds are not available the City would also be responsible to pay for up to 25% of the involved officers costs (\$16,691.75 per year). This particular grant is renewable each year for a maximum of three years. It is allowable at that time to apply for a continuation based on the effectiveness of the grant.

For your review I have attached a "Statement of the Problem" report I submitted to the grants office and a copy of the "Alaska State Troopers Drug and Alcohol report to the Governor and Alaska Legislature".

In an effort to provide a coordinated drug enforcement effort in the Mat-Su valley I would request your approval of this concept. Additional figures and final request for authorization will be provided at the time the state approves the funding for the position.

If you have any questions or concerns I am available at your convenience.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The area covered by the "Mat-Su, Bureau of Drug Enforcement" is primarily the Matanuska Susitna Valley area, with the cities of Wasilla and Palmer being in the core and most densely populated areas. Due to the major highways that go through the Mat-Su area there is a large amount of vehicular traffic from residents, commuters and people involved in recreational activities which result in the valley's population increasing on most weekends both during the summer and winter months. Due to the close proximity to Anchorage it has been well documented that there are major cocaine and marijuana dealers that reside in the valley and do their business primarily in the Anchorage area. These same individuals are also involved in trading marijuana for other drugs of choice that are being dealt in the Mat-Su area.

One of the primary goals of the Mat-Su unit has been the investigation and eradication of marijuana grow operations which are known to exist in the area. Some of the units goals were met during 1994 even though they were working with diminished resources and manpower. For the Mat-Su unit to continue to be effective in their investigations, eradication efforts and intelligence gathering coordination with other agencies and resources such as additional manpower are required.

Current indicators show a definite tie between drug use and other criminal offenses. Investigations and seizures of marijuana in Alaska and other states show that marijuana grown in the Mat-Su valley is often seized and is a sought after commodity by purchasers of drugs. Grow operations are present throughout the valley and have an impact on the criminal activity in the area.

A continuing effort to control the cultivation / distribution of marijuana, and the sale of other drugs at the source will result in a downward trend in reference to other related offenses (i.e. burglary, robbery, domestic violence, theft, DWI).

The investigation, identification and eradication of commercial marijuana operations can best be accomplished by pro-active enforcement using a Multi Jurisdictional Task Force approach that is able to use the resources of all the police agencies in the area. This approach has previously and is still being used in many areas and has been found to be effective by having the ability to erase boundary lines and effectively work the areas where the problem exists.

ALASKA STATE TROOPERS DRUG AND ALCOHOL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE

July 1, 1993 to June 30, 1994

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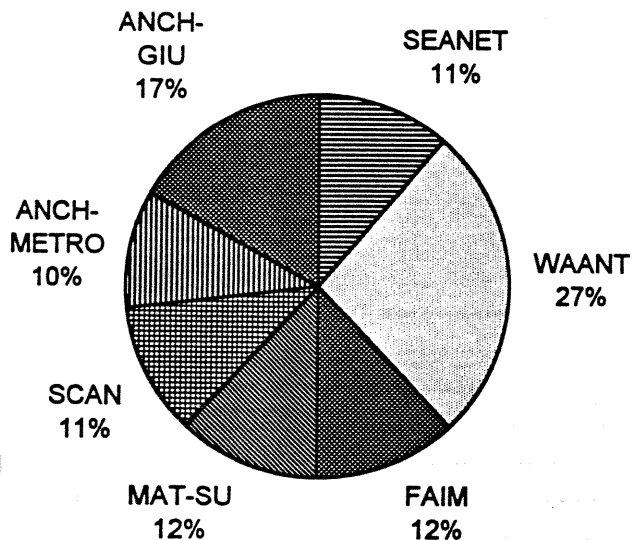
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit has maintained a need specific, productive, and coordinated presence during Fiscal Year 1994. The Department of Public Safety has long advocated that successful drug reduction is dependent upon an effort that melds traditional law enforcement methods with new programs that address educational, social, and community concerns relating to illicit substances. In that vein, the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit has continued its deterrent pressures of arrest, seizures of assets, and prosecutions while implementing new programs that involve drug awareness presentations in local schools, specialized training for less sophisticated public safety resources in rural Alaska and educational offerings to local businesses and other professional groups to develop networks to aid in the identification of drug traffickers.

We are extremely proud of the leadership role our personal have developed in the drug law enforcement community. They have fostered a diligent and collaborative investigative relationship with many police departments across the State through multi-jurisdictional/multi-agency relationships. These units and their working percentages are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Cases investigated by unit for FY94. Total number of cases 2331.



LOCATION	UNIT
SOUTHEAST ALASKA	SEANET
WESTERN ALASKA	WAANT
FAIRBANKS	FAIM
CENTRAL ALASKA	MAT-SU
SOUTH CENTRAL ALASKA	SCAN
ANCHORAGE METRO-APD AND AK STATE TROOPERS	ANCH-METRO
ANCHORAGE POLICE GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS	ANCH-GIU

II. GOALS

The Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit must ensure that the Alaska Drug Control Strategy is consistent with, and compliments the President's National Drug Control Policy by coordinating a law enforcement effort that reduces the availability of controlled substances and illegal alcohol throughout the State of Alaska by various means, to include:

- Apprehension of criminal suspects.
- Seizure of controlled substances and illegal alcohol.
- Providing investigative training and support to local law enforcement.
- Supporting and participating in public educational programs.

III. STAFFING

With a State population nearing 570,000 distributed in communities varying in size from 260,000 to less than 100, the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit alone cannot address many regional concerns. Considering the time and costs for respective units to travel and service their area of responsibility, adequate staffing levels are critical. To increase the number of law enforcement officers specifically assigned to combat illegal alcohol and drugs, the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit has developed programs to enhance the multi-agency task forces operating throughout the State. These programs include a proposal to use Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) monies for special commission salaries and a proposal to use Bureau of Justice Administration (BJA) monies to fund two training sessions in western Alaska. DEA funds had not previously been used for special commission salaries. These funds enabled SDEU to augment manpower during the latter months of FY94 with officers specifically assigned to investigate marijuana cases. The BJA funds were used to train village officers in drug investigation techniques. Increases in the number of cases and drug seizures have resulted from these programs.

During Fiscal Years 1991, 1992, 1993, and the first three quarters of 1994, an average of forty (40) state and local officers were committed to the State's drug enforcement effort. The Alaska State Troopers provided an average of twenty-five (25) officers during this time period. During the last quarter of Fiscal Year 1994, the State Troopers contingent was reduced to sixteen (16) positions statewide. The position reductions have very seriously compromised the State's ability to continue effective drug enforcement.

The State's continued ability to impact drug offenders, predominantly marijuana activities, has been contingent upon the assistance and resources available through the National Guard's Drug Eradication and Interdiction Unit. This highly specialized unit has proven very effective in the fight against drugs by providing assistance in the following areas:

- surface reconnaissance, surveillance, and transportation;
- aerial reconnaissance, surveillance; transportation, photo reconnaissance, and interdiction;
- ground radar;
- cargo inspection;
- training;
- coordination, liaison, management;
- marijuana greenhouse and drug lab eradication;
- film processing;
- administration, information, automated data processing, logistics, and maintenance; and
- engineer support.

Without these services and resources, many costly operations would not be undertaken.

As State resources have been decreased, more of the burden to continue counter drug measures has been placed on local law enforcement. It is important to note that those agencies participating in the State's multi-agency task forces, do so through funds made available by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This grant program requires participating agencies to invest local funds in order to receive federal funding. Historically, these agencies have been able to make these "cash matches" through forfeitures of assets obtained during drug investigations. Recent Federal Ninth Circuit Court rulings have threatened local agencies future participation in these grants by limiting the forfeiture process.

Alaska has placed a significant dependence on Federal dollars for drug enforcement funding. By the last quarter of Fiscal Year 1994, Federal monies funded nine (9) commissioned officers and seven (7) civilian personnel (including clerk typists, an accounting technician, a latent fingerprint examiner and two grant administrators). The State in turn, funded seven (7) commissioned officers and four (4) civilian personnel.

IV. MULTI-AGENCY TASK FORCES

No one organization can address the myriad of problems created by drug abuse. To enhance effectiveness, the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit has encouraged partnerships with local agencies where forces are joined to specifically combat regional drug problems. These partnerships evolved over time into multi-agency task forces.

In April 1994, work force reductions were forced within the Division of Alaska State Troopers to offset operating budget shortfalls. To minimize the impact on the Division's patrol force, positions were eliminated in the State's drug program. A much reduced investigative

Figure 2: Number of full time law enforcement officers assigned statewide to multi-agency task force and the number of Alaska State Troopers that are included in that total number.

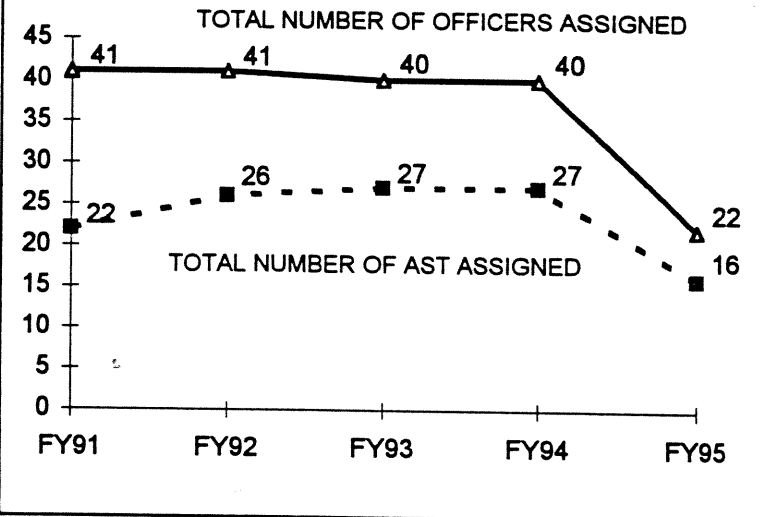
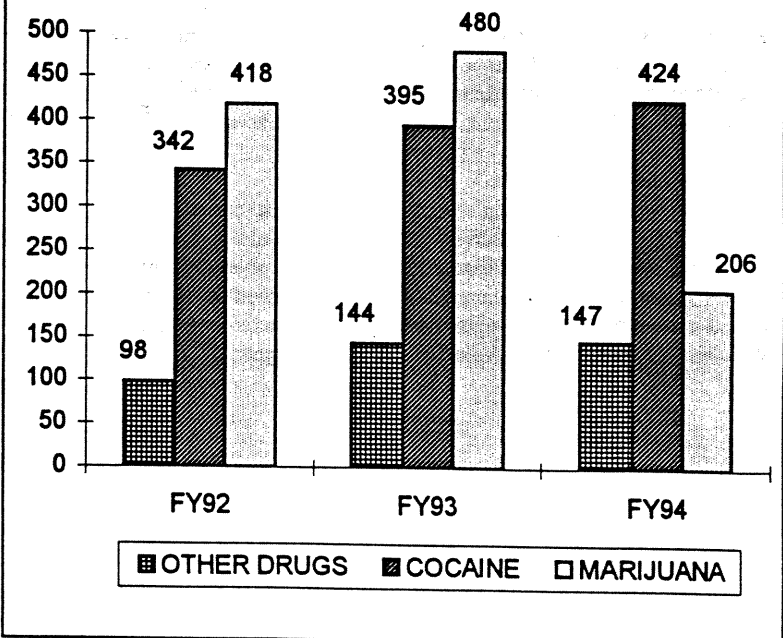


Figure 3: Drug investigations conducted by multi-agency task forces.



presence on the Kenai Peninsula and in the Ketchikan area has resulted. This has had a noticeable impact on the Kenai Peninsula where there is no formal participation by the local departments in the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit task force.

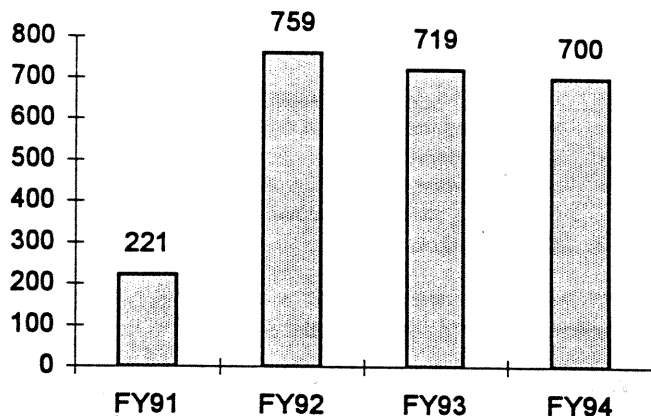
With the exception of the Drug Enforcement Administration's task force, which focuses on financiers, importers, and wholesale distributors, collaborative drug enforcement programs in the Anchorage bowl no longer exist. The past cooperative agreement with the Anchorage Police Department was abandoned by the State, and local law enforcement's continued ability to significantly impact mid-to higher-level drug traffickers will undoubtedly be more difficult without the personnel and financial support previously provided by the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit. This represents a serious detriment to effective drug enforcement, in that multi-agency investigations previously coordinated by the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit are seldom conducted in the Anchorage Municipality where half the State's population resides, and through which the majority of drugs enter Alaska.

In a Department of Justice June 1994 survey, Alaska law enforcement overwhelmingly identified three major law enforcement problems:

- The devastating impact of illegal alcohol and associated bootlegging in rural Alaska.
- Street drug sales of "crack" cocaine in the metropolitan hubs of Anchorage and Fairbanks.
- Assaults, sexual assault and other violent crimes are unequivocally perceived as the primary symptoms of the use of alcohol and illegal drugs.

Without sufficient resources to continue comprehensive drug enforcement programs, these problems will likely worsen.

Figure 4: Drug and alcohol arrests documented by multi-agency task forces. Includes arrests for offenses involving the possession, sale, and manufacture of illicit substances such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and alcohol.



V. DRUG ACTIVITY

Analysis of reported drug offenses indicates that illegal drug activity is commonplace throughout most of Alaska. Offenses reported by the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit have increased considerably during this period, but actual cases investigated were less than in FY93.

Arrest numbers were also lower, but these numbers can be deceiving. Most sale/delivery cases are presented for prosecution only after at least two, and oftentimes three or more, undercover purchases have been documented. The defendant is later arrested and charged, but the single arrest does not accurately reflect the volume of cases for which the defendant was arrested.

Figure 5: Total drug offenses, includes sale, possession, and manufacture of illicit substances such as heroin, cocaine, and marijuana that were documented by multi-agency task forces. Does not include alcohol offenses.

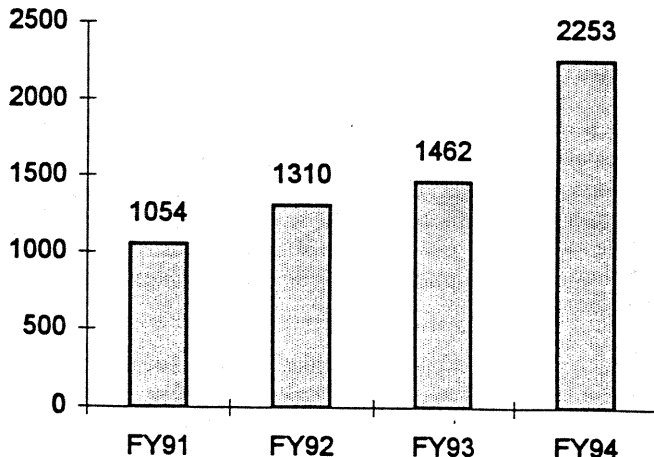
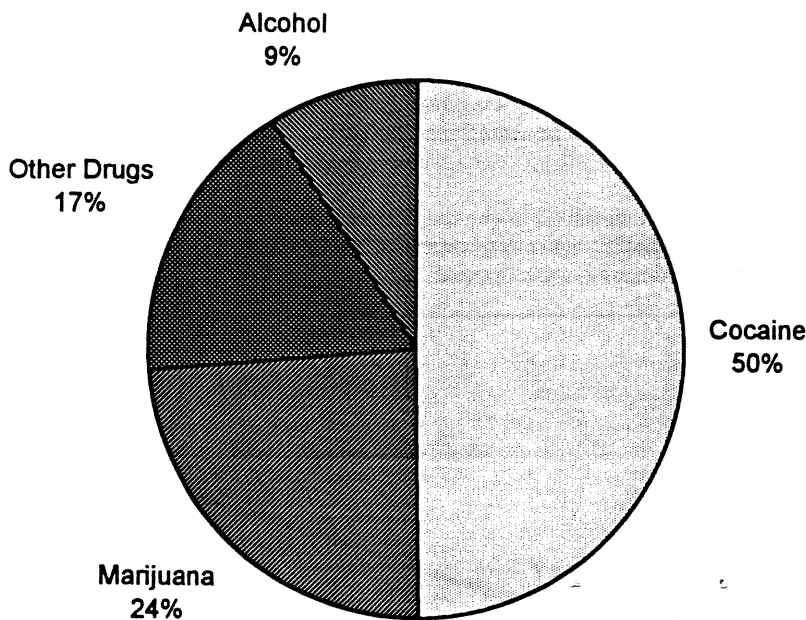


Figure 6: Type of drug offenses reported in Alaska in FY94. Includes offenses involving illegal sale, possession, and manufacture of the indicated substance.



CASE TYPE	
Cocaine	424
Marijuana	206
Other Drugs	147
Alcohol	78

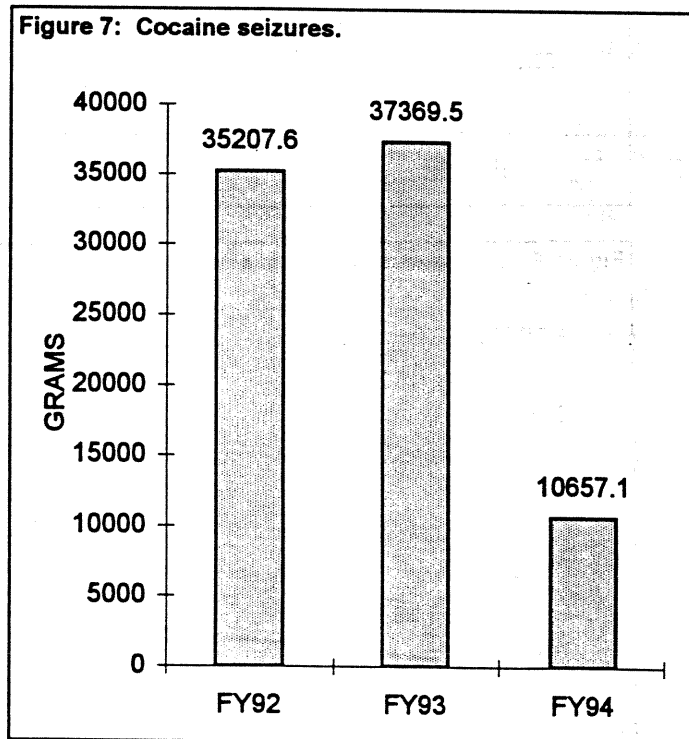
(A) COCAINE

Offenses relating to cocaine have increased during this reporting period for several reasons. Many of the offenses were proactive cases generated by the Mat-Su Unit where the previous priority was marijuana cultivation investigations. Local intelligence and a rise in property crimes reported by local law enforcement suggested that a substantial cocaine network was operating in the Valley. As a result, a long term investigation was initiated and the network was successfully identified, and the participants arrested and prosecuted.

The "crack" derivative of cocaine has been seen much more frequently in the inner city neighborhoods of Anchorage and Fairbanks. This form of cocaine represents an easily manufactured, low-cost substance commonly seen in areas with poor economic structures. Periodic street-level campaigns in both major cities have resulted in more cocaine cases than in past years. Unfortunately, the increased case volume did not result in an increase in cocaine seizures.

A reduced "buy and expense" budget during the latter quarter of Fiscal Year 1994, limited undercover purchases and subsequent seizures of cocaine. "Crack" investigations, although many in number, did not generate large product seizures.

Figure 7: Cocaine seizures.



(B) MARIJUANA

Marijuana has maintained its popularity in Alaska. Fiscal Year 1994 proved to be a successful year for Alaska law enforcement with the seizure of 13,799 plants and 583 pounds of processed marijuana. The number of plants seized is significant in that threshold amounts for Federal case adoption have compelled offenders to cultivate low volume grows to safeguard against Federal prosecution. During many Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit investigations, defendants cited this very reason, indicating they often cultivated multiple grows below Federal thresholds to maintain productivity. Most cases were investigated successfully resulting in more plants seized, but with fewer cases reported. Regardless of the legal ramifications, marijuana represents a substantial illegal economy for offenders willing to risk discovery and prosecution.

The increase in processed marijuana seized this fiscal year is not indicative of any trend, but results from a heightened investigative focus on marijuana during the last quarter of Fiscal Year 1994 when the undercover expense budget was transferred from the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit to offset an operating budget shortfall elsewhere in the Division.

Figure 8: Marijuana plants seized.

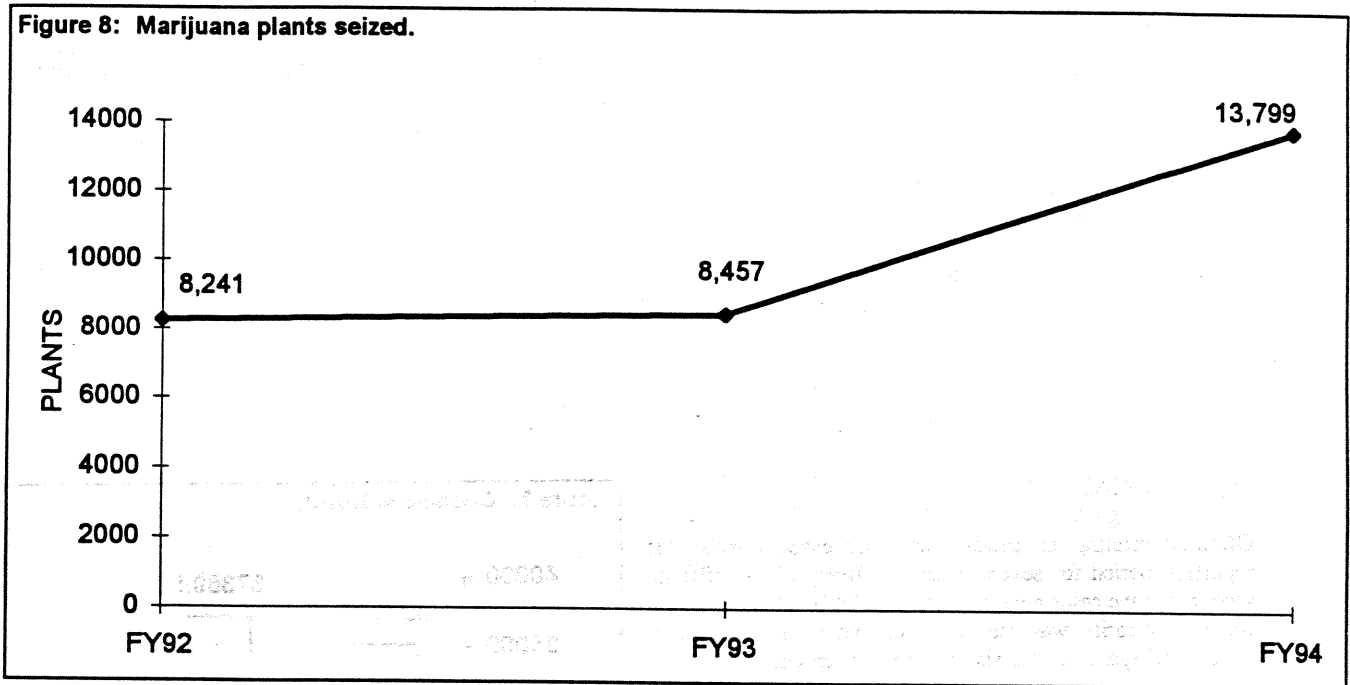
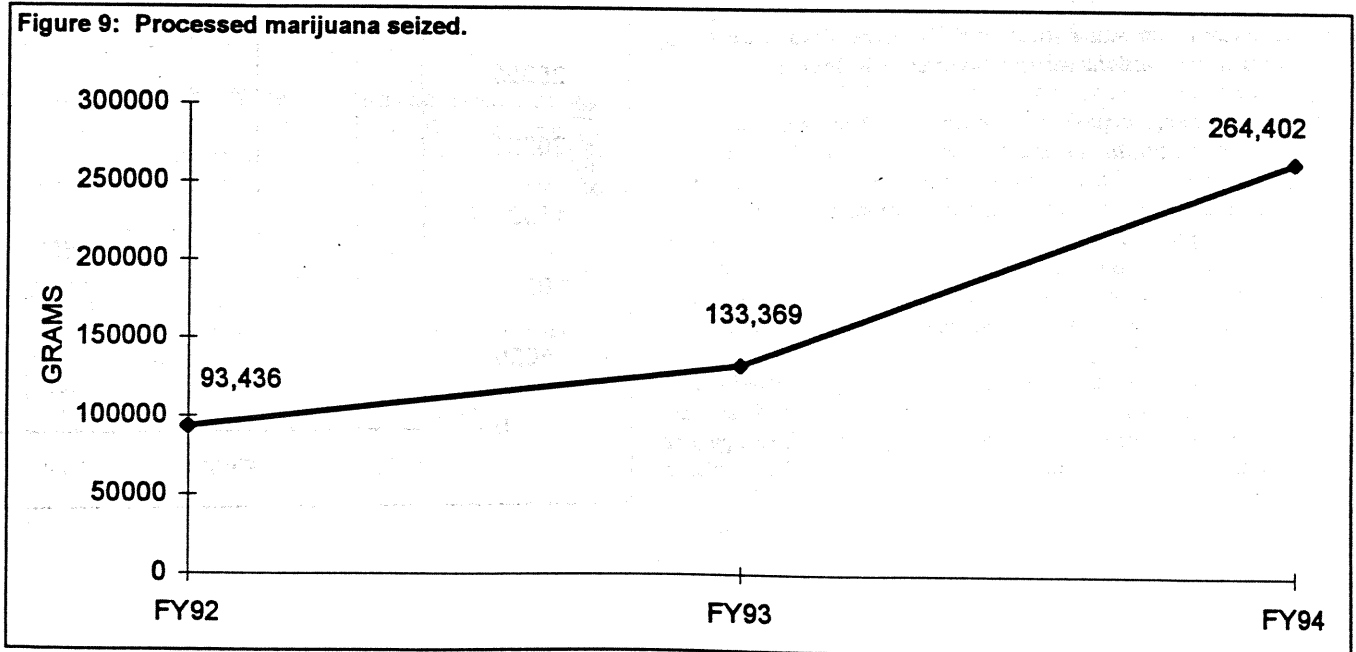


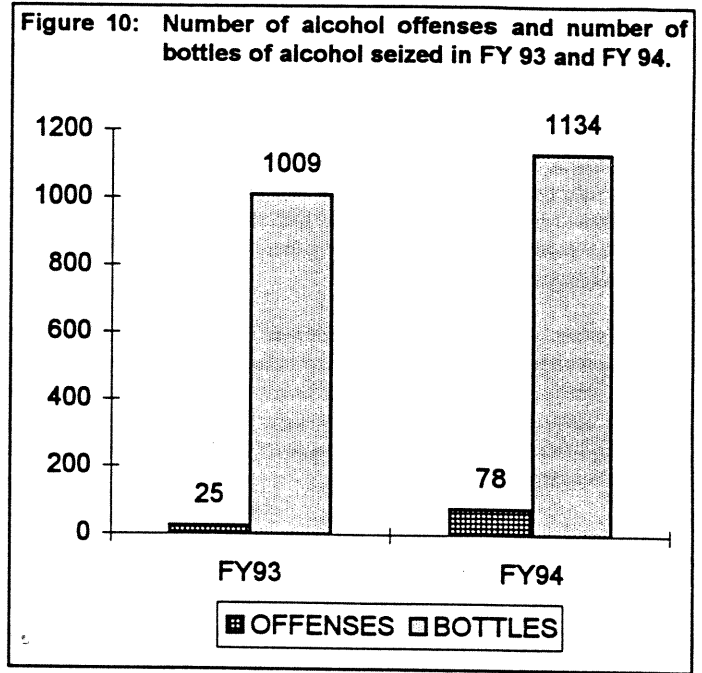
Figure 9: Processed marijuana seized.



(C) ALCOHOL

Alcohol and associated bootlegging remain the primary law enforcement concern in rural, or "bush," Alaska. Many communities have taken a firm stance against such activity by ratifying appropriate local options. Unfortunately, there is little collaboration between communities, allowing for considerable differences in laws relating to alcohol in any given region, which does little to limit access to alcohol.

The Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit has continued to conduct undercover investigations throughout Western Alaska, but they have augmented these traditional methods with other programs during this period. Two specialized training sessions were held for areawide Village Public Safety Officers and Village Police Officers to help them identify illegal drug and alcohol offenders. As a result of these training sessions, cases initiated by Village Officers have increased noticeably. In the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta alone, Village Officers seized one hundred and thirty-two thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight dollars (\$132,768.00) worth of illegal substances including alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine. (The latter months of this enforcement effort occurred outside of the reporting period, but it is included to provide an overall view of the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit's ongoing programs and efforts.) These substances were seized during a twelve month period beginning in November of 1993 and ending in November 1994, involving seventy-five (75) investigations coordinated with the Statewide Drug Enforcement, WAANT Unit. In total, the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit seized 1134 bottles of illegal alcohol in FY94.



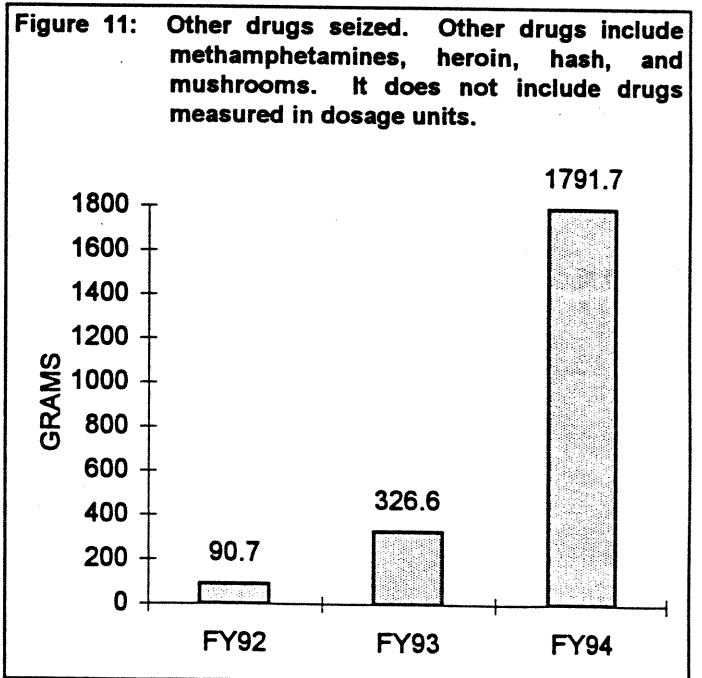
Additionally, the Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit assigned an investigator to the Division of Alaska State Trooper's west coast Detachment to further a community based, problem solving program in the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta. This investigator worked predominantly with local villages to coordinate a structured program that focused and encouraged village empowerment in Public Safety and specifically bootlegging problems.

(D) OTHER DRUGS

Although seen infrequently, heroin, methamphetamine, and LSD represent a growing problem for Alaska law enforcement. Historically, Alaska follows the national drug trends by several years. Steadily increasing offenses relating to these types of drugs indicate that their popularity, particularly in the major transportation hubs of the State, is increasing.

Methamphetamine is the most frequently used synthetic drug in the country, and is the most prevalent illegally manufactured substance in the United States. According to Drug Enforcement Administration reports, most manufacture occurs in the Southwest and Western United States. Intelligence relating to methamphetamine manufacturing in Alaska increased during Fiscal Year 1994, but no laboratories were discovered. However, two cases resulted in seizures of multi-thousand pill quantities of ephedrine, a methamphetamine precursor.

Alaska's sparsely populated, rural areas provide potential manufacturing locations for methamphetamine labs. It is believed that clandestine laboratories are sometimes mobile, hidden in tractor trailer vans and moved from region to region. The dangers produced by these labs, including explosions, fires, toxic spills and irreparable damage to the environment, compel Alaska law enforcement to develop and prepare for their inevitable influx.



ASSET FORFEITURES

Fiscal Year '94 realized a drastic drop in value of assets seized. This is partially attributable to a heightened concern for the asset forfeiture process. Civil liberties groups and defense lawyers have long maintained that existing rules make it too easy for the government to take assets, and banks and lending institutions have voiced their criticism as well.

More importantly, a controversial court ruling by the Federal Ninth Circuit Court may have an adverse effect on future asset forfeiture proceedings and the availability of those proceeds in the months and years to come. This ruling has the practical effect of forcing prosecutors to choose between including the forfeiture action within the criminal proceeding, or filing a civil forfeiture suit. Although, the Ninth Circuit's decision conflicts with other Federal Appeals Courts, Federal law enforcement agencies have essentially stopped forfeiture proceedings on the State's behalf.

The State of Alaska and law enforcement agencies have become accustomed to using forfeiture proceeds to facilitate education and awareness programs, as well as law enforcement and prosecution efforts directed towards the use and sale of illegal drugs and alcohol in our communities. The low volume of assets seized and associated returns will undoubtedly jeopardize many agencies continued involvement in drug enforcement unless other funding sources are identified and pursued. Few agencies could participate in drug enforcement without Federal funding assistance such as the Edward Byrne Memorial Fund. Many of these agencies rely on forfeiture proceeds to make the cash matches required for such funding.

Figure 12: Assets Seized in FY 93 and FY 94.

