

THE L.E.A.D. TASK FORCE

of TUSCARAWAS COUNTY, OHIO

PHONE (330) 339-7713

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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News Release

Abuse of Incense as an Inhalant

Local law enforcement officers in Tuscarawas County have become aware of juveniles as well as young adults who are abusing a certain kind of incense by smoking the substance. The substance is commonly known on the street as K2 although it is sold under other commercial names throughout the country. The substance looks like a cross between tobacco and marijuana and is sold in many local convenient stores, tobacco shops and other outlets in the community.

K2 is said to have been created in the 1990's by a chemist and is also said to have been marketed in China and Korea as a plant growth stimulant. The compound is believed to work on the brain the same way as marijuana's active ingredient THC or tetrahydrocannabinol affecting the central nervous system. The product however is said to create a highly stimulated intoxicated feeling that is much the opposite of marijuana. Some of those affects noted are that of an increased heart rate, dangerously elevated blood pressure and vomiting. Some users have described the high as "a very intense rush". The Task Force has received information that juveniles are purchasing this substance very frequently believing that because it is legal to buy it is also legal to smoke.

According to Assistant Tuscarawas County Prosecutor Michael Ernest smoking the incense is absolutely illegal and a charge of Abusing a Harmful Intoxicant (O.R.C. 2925.31) would be appropriate in the event a person is caught smoking the product. This is the same 1st degree misdemeanor charge that is used for "huffing" paint and other common household products. A second conviction qualifies as a 5th degree felony according to the Revised Code.

Task force detectives are also beginning to encounter other types of herbal synthetic drugs. Detectives have been able to purchase a white powder sold on the street as "speed powder". The powder is white in color and resembles a finely granulated table sugar. When tested at a chemical laboratory this substance was found to contain no narcotics. The effects are said to be a great intense short lived high similar to cocaine followed by a severe headache and nausea.

Officers encourage all parents as well as school officials to be aware of the abuse potential of this product and report any improper illegal use of it to their local law enforcement office or to the County Drug Task Force at 330-339-7713.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST DRUGS

