



## KLAMATH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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### **Media Release**

**Date:** August 1, 2018

**RE:** Illegal Marijuana Grow – North County

**Contact:** Sheriff Chris Kaber

Between the months of May and July 2018, the Klamath County Sheriff's office (KCSO) received numerous tips from citizens regarding a possible illegal marijuana grow on Chinquapin Drive in Crescent. This is in Northern Klamath County.

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 KCSO deputies responded to 11866 Chinquapin Drive where a search warrant was executed. The investigation and resulting search warrant revealed that William M. Felder and Deborah J. Felder were growing substantially more marijuana plants than legally permitted under current Oregon recreational or medical marijuana laws. They were found to be growing in excess of 330 marijuana plants. During the execution of the search warrant, deputies seized over 300 marijuana plants as well as equipment used to process the plants. Both subjects were charged with Unlawful Possession and Unlawful Manufacture of Marijuana. Plants above the legally permitted number were seized as evidence.

Additional information regarding illegal MJ grow enforcement in Klamath County:

The KCSO is continuing into the second year of a program to identify and prosecute illegal marijuana growers in Klamath County - of which there are many. Despite the ongoing discussions and controversy surrounding marijuana, i.e. recreational vs. medical; helpful vs harmful; legal vs black market; there are existing laws which law enforcement is tasked with enforcing. The Klamath County Sheriff's Office is committed to enforce these laws to the best of their ability out of respect to the 58% of voters that voted to opt out of allowing the commercial growing and processing of marijuana in the county.

Using information available from the 2017 growing season, and new information coming in this year, KCSO has documented more than "70" marijuana grows which are under investigation for likely being illegal grows. *(Please refer to the statement at the end of this release for an explanation of difficulties faced by law enforcement in our state.)*

Illegal growers should be aware that just because they got away with it last year doesn't mean we don't know who they are and aren't going to pinpoint their grow this year. If they're running an illegal operation (which most are), we look forward to harvesting these grows for them after they've cared for them all summer. ***“Grow legal or leave.”***

Members of the community are encouraged to contact the Sheriff's Office with any information they have regarding large marijuana grows or thefts of water to irrigate those grows at 541-883-5130.

**A paragraph taken from a publication of the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission:**

Despite legal avenues for purchases and sales of marijuana within Oregon, an illegal marijuana market continues to cause public safety concerns, including diversion of marijuana to other states, sales of marijuana to underage buyers, cultivation of marijuana on federal lands, and the enrichment of organized criminal operations. Illegal market operations are also challenging to address, given the difficulty in drawing empirical distinctions between legal and illegal cultivation and distribution, the industry's cash-driven operations, and the added layer that some of the counties most impacted by illegal marijuana operations have long suffered from starkly under-resourced public safety systems.

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