

Ten Vehicles Stopped with Contraband Tobacco during Multi-Agency Tobacco Smuggling Operation

[News Release](#): 10 vehicles stopped during multi agency tobacco smuggling operation

Cornwall, Ontario - On January 24th, 2008, officers from the Central St. Lawrence Valley RCMP Detachment- Cornwall and Valleyfield offices, Kingston RCMP Customs and Excise Unit, Ottawa RCMP Customs and Excise Unit, Canada Border Services Agency, Ontario Provincial Police, Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service, Cornwall Community Police Service and the Ontario Ministry of Revenue Special Investigations Branch participated in an enforcement day targeting known organizations involved in the smuggling of contraband tobacco from the Cornwall area.

Individuals involved in tobacco smuggling departing the Cornwall area towards Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa were identified and intercepted. This joint operation focused on targeting individuals who belong to various organized crime groups which facilitate the distribution of the contraband tobacco throughout Canada. The result of this operation permitted the partner law enforcement agencies to intercept ten different vehicles in the following regions:

- 3 vehicles in South Stormont, Ontario
- 1 vehicle in South Glengarry, Ontario
- 1 vehicle in Prescott, Ontario
- 3 vehicles in Cornwall, Ontario
- 1 vehicle in Les Coteaux, Quebec
- 1 vehicle in Saint-Zotique, Quebec

These interceptions permitted the arrest of seven individuals (3 from Cornwall, Ontario, 1 from Barrie, Ontario, 1 from Akwesasne, Ontario, 1 from Kahnawake, Quebec, 1 from Hogansburg, New York) who will be charged under authority of the *Excise Act 2001* for the possession of a tobacco product not properly stamped according to the *Excise Act 2001* as well as being charged under authority of the *Provincial Tobacco Tax Act*. Among those arrested, charges were laid against Jade Oakes, an 18 year old male from Hogansburg, New York and Chelsea Saucier, a 24 year old female from Cornwall, Ontario who were both held in custody for a bail hearing that took place at the Valleyfield court on January 25th, 2008. Also during the interceptions another four individuals (2 from Kahnawake, Quebec, 1 from Akwesasne, Ontario and 1 from Cornwall, Ontario) were questioned after being stopped with contraband tobacco and released while the investigation continues.

Items Seized

- 8 vehicles seized valued at \$66,300
- 6,950 assorted re-sealable bags each containing 200 cigarettes seized represents 1,390,000 cigarettes valued at \$152,900
- 2,431.2 kilograms of bulk fine cut tobacco seized is valued at \$218,808

The total value of the seized items during this operation is \$438,008.

Coordinated actions by the RCMP and the partner law enforcement agencies in the Central St. Lawrence Valley region has resulted in a number of significant illegal tobacco seizures. If we are to successfully face the challenge in the years to come, we must continue to maintain strategic world alliances and ensure ongoing, close cooperation between local authorities and the private sector. We are committed to making the best possible use of all resources, experiences and expertise.

- 30 -

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