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News Release

Coal heads prevail as officers interdict over \$1 million worth of methamphetamine concealed within shipment of charcoal

OTAY MESA, Calif., — U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at the Otay Mesa Cargo Facility discovered over a million dollars' worth of methamphetamine hidden within a shipment of charcoal.

On Thursday, at approximately 8:29 p.m., CBP officers encountered a 46-year-old male driving a commercial tractor-trailer with a shipment manifested for charcoal. The driver, a valid border crossing card holder, was referred for further examination by CBP officers along with the tractor-trailer and shipment.

In secondary, a non-intrusive scanning technology was utilized to conduct a full scan of the tractor trailer. After examination, irregularities were observed and CBP officers requested a CBP human and narcotics detection canine. The canine team responded and alerted officers to the presence of narcotics.

CBP officers discovered and extracted a total of 119 packages concealed within the shipment of charcoal. The narcotics were tested and identified as methamphetamine with a total weight of 782 pounds.

“This finding represents a significant interception showcasing our officers’ dedication to ensuring border security,” stated Rosa E. Hernandez, Port Director for the Otay Mesa Ports of Entry. “Our devoted team is focused on safeguarding our communities from harmful drugs, utilizing new and innovative technology to support our comprehensive enforcement strategies.”

CBP officers seized the tractor, trailer, and narcotics.

These seizures are the result of [Operation Apollo](#), a holistic counter-fentanyl effort that began on October 26, 2023 in southern California, and expanded to Arizona on April 10, 2024. Operation Apollo focuses on intelligence collection and partnerships, and utilizes local CBP field assets augmented by federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners to boost resources, increase collaboration, and target the smuggling of fentanyl into the United States.

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official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.