



NEWS RELEASE

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Yuma Agents Encounter Marijuana Load Wellton Desert *300 Pounds Destroyed in Fire, Twelve Pounds Survive*

YUMA, Ariz. -- Border Patrol Agents from Yuma Sector encountered two vehicles, one of which was transporting a large load of illegal contraband last Friday. Agents assigned to the Wellton Station were working in the desert southeast of Wellton when the encounter occurred.

The agents responded to the area after receiving information about two vehicles that drove across the border from Mexico and into the vast desert. Agents arrived and spotted a 1997 green Ford pickup driving south towards Mexico. The driver apparently saw the agents and decided to turn south in an effort to get away. Agents followed the dust trail of the pickup for 30 minutes. The agents located the vehicle when it became stuck in the desert sand. The vehicle's engine and cab compartments were engulfed in flames. The first agent on the scene quickly discovered the occupants of the pickup had fled south on foot. While checking to make sure the cab was empty, the fire reached the pickup bed, which was loaded with several bundles.

The agents were able to retrieve one bundle from the bed. The bundle contained about 12 pounds of marijuana. The agents fought the fire with their extinguishers, but, were unable to contain it. Through the flames the agents were able to see 25-30 bundles, containing over 300 pounds of what appeared to be marijuana. The seized 12 pounds was valued at \$ 9,360.00. Additional agents and a Border Patrol pilot arrived in the area and attempted to locate the fleeing subjects along with the second vehicle.

The agents located the tracks and determined that both subjects and the second vehicle returned to Mexico. The contraband that survived the fire was turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

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