

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

News Release

April 6, 2009

Not so FAST

**CBP Officers Seize Nearly Three Tons of Marijuana
Hidden in Two FAST Shipments at Laredo Port of Entry**

Laredo, Texas –Within a 24-hour period, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Field Operations officers at the Laredo Port of Entry discovered nearly three tons of marijuana in two commercial trucks that had been enrolled in a trusted shipper program.

The latest seizure occurred shortly before 7:30 p.m. on Friday, April 3, 2009 at World Trade Bridge. A CBP officer referred a 1999 Freightliner tractor that had entered the bridge through the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lane hauling a 2007 Token trailer laden with a shipment of auto parts for secondary inspection. The conveyance, part of the FAST program, a trusted shipper program, was driven by a 29-year-old female Mexican citizen from Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico. A non-intrusive imaging system scan indicated anomalies within the shipment. CBP officers conducted an intensive examination of the tractor trailer at the cargo dock and discovered bundles commingled with the shipment of auto parts. CBP officers discovered 157 bundles containing a total of nearly 3,472 pounds of marijuana. The marijuana has an estimated street value of \$3.4 million.

The other seizure occurred shortly before 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, 2009 at Colombia-Solidarity Bridge. A CBP officer referred a 1997 Freightliner tractor that had entered the bridge through the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lane hauling a 1999 Wabash trailer laden with a shipment of empty racks for secondary inspection. The conveyance, part of the FAST program, a trusted shipper program, was driven by a 27-year-old male Mexican citizen from Colombia, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. A non-intrusive imaging system scan indicated anomalies within the rear part of the trailer. CBP Canine “Martin” alerted to the odor of narcotics emanating from the rear of the trailer. CBP officers conducted an intensive examination of the tractor trailer at the cargo dock and discovered bundles in boxes in the rear of the trailer. Within the 101 bundles, CBP officers discovered a total of nearly 2,505 pounds of marijuana. The marijuana has an estimated street value of \$2.5 million.

“Our frontline CBP officers utilized their high tech tools, canines and inspectional experience to detect and interdict two significant loads of narcotics in less than 24 hours that had entered through a lane designated for our trusted shipper program, FAST,” said Gene Garza, CBP Port Director, Laredo. “Our continuous review of our trusted shipper

program to ensure compliance with the high standards of the program has proven to be effective.”

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control, and protection of our Nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.