

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

News Release

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CBP officers at El Paso port seize 4.5 tons of marijuana in one bust

EL PASO, Texas – U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers working at the El Paso port of entry seized 9,084 pounds of marijuana in a single bust Wednesday. The drugs were hidden in a commercial shipment of auto parts. The estimated street value of the seized marijuana is \$7,267,200.

The seizure occurred shortly before noon Wednesday at the commercial cargo facility at the Ysleta international crossing. A CBP officer referred a 1995 GMC tractor that had entered the bridge through the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lane hauling a 1999 Utility trailer laden with a shipment of auto parts for secondary inspection. 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 removed 6,640 bundles containing a total of 9,084 pounds of marijuana from the trailer.

“In order to maintain the integrity of the FAST program, CBP officers will verify that the system is not compromised by smuggling organization through targeted and random exams,” said William Molaski, U.S. Customs and Border Protection El Paso Port Director. “We trust but we also verify. Our recurring review of the trusted shipper program, through various layers of enforcement, ensures compliance.”

The driver of the truck had his FAST crossing privileges cancelled. No arrests were made at the time, and the investigation is continuing. The FAST program is designed to ensure security and safety of trans-border commercial shipments at selected cargo ports of entry. Eligibility for the FAST program requires participants (carriers, drivers, importers and southern border manufactures) to submit an application, agreement and security profile. The FAST program allows known low risk commercial cargo shipments to received expedited border processing at cargo ports.

In addition to the previously mentioned seizure, CBP officers at the El Paso port of entry recorded five more drug busts on Wednesday, seizing an additional 1,335 pounds of marijuana. The total for the day was 10,419 pounds of marijuana.

While anti-terrorism is the primary mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the inspection process at the ports of entry associated with this mission results in impressive numbers of enforcement actions in all categories.

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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.