



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
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Chief of Police

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2019

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ILLEGAL MARIJUANA GROW HOUSES DISCOVERED

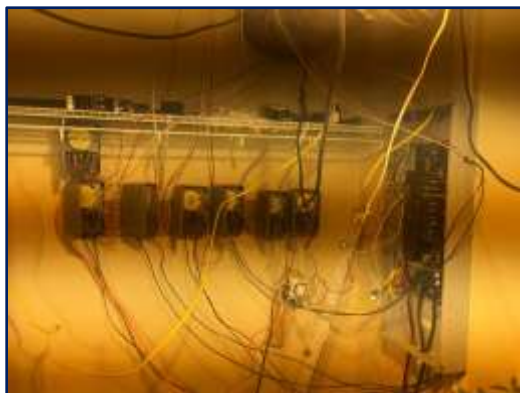
RIVERSIDE, CA – The Riverside Police Department's Narcotic's Unit recently received complaints regarding two homes in the Orangecrest neighborhood that were suspected to be operating as illegal marijuana grow houses. They were located in the 19000 block of San Luis Rey Lane and the 19000 block of Krameria Avenue. The initial investigation showed the electrical meters at these locations were bypassed and allowing several thousand dollars' worth of electricity to be stolen from the City of Riverside.

As the detectives continued their investigation, they located a third house in the 19000 block of San Luis Rey Lane that was also believed to be involved in illegal marijuana cultivation. All three homes were located in close proximity to either an elementary or middle school, or a licensed day care facility.



Detectives obtained search warrants for all three locations, and with the assistance of the Riverside Police Department's Vice Unit, they were served on Wednesday night, February 27, 2019. As a result, detectives confirmed all three homes were solely being used to illegally cultivate marijuana.





They seized over 1,500 marijuana plants and suspected methamphetamine. Detectives also discovered the locations were stealing electricity from the city. The growing equipment used was illegally wired and observed to be a tremendous fire risk. Various chemicals and fertilizers were found and stored in ways that posed a danger.

While detectives were searching the residence in the 19000 block of Krameria Avenue, a suspect involved in the illegal cultivation operation arrived in a vehicle. The driver, later identified as Chaoqing Ni, 43-years-old of La Puente, saw the detectives and quickly drove away. Detectives were attempting to catch up to this suspect as he drove away at a high rate of speed when he lost control of the car and crashed into the front of a residence on Paso Robles Drive. The suspect was eventually taken into custody at the dead end of San Juan Capistrano Court.

Chaoqing Ni was arrested and booked into the Robert Presley Detention Center on charges of illegally cultivating marijuana, theft of utilities, and hit and run. Two other involved suspects, Xiaoquan Liu, 55-years-old of Rosemead, and Xiao Liu, 49-years-old of Florida, were contacted at one of the homes on San Luis Rey Lane and arrested on charges of illegal marijuana cultivation.



According to Riverside Municipal Code section 19.342.030 (B), "no individual or entity may plant, cultivate, harvest, dry, or process marijuana plants inside a private residence, or inside an accessory structure to a private residence located upon the grounds of a private residence, in excess of the limitations imposed by California Health and Safety Code section 11362.2." And 11362.2 (a)(3) of the Health & Safety code states "not more than six living plants may be planted, cultivated, harvested, dried, or processed within a single private residence, or upon the grounds of that private residence, at one time."

"These illegal activities embedded in our neighborhoods pose a risk to families and children," said Deputy Chief Jeff Greer of the Riverside Police Department. *"We will*



continue to partner with our community members in order to help solve these problems and enhance neighborhood livability."



Ward 4 Councilman Chuck Conder stated "the proliferation of illegal grow facilities in our neighborhoods should not be a surprise to anyone. These dangerous activities have been seen in every state that has legalized the recreational use of marijuana. The illegal and shoddy rewiring of electrical connections needed to provide the massive power requirements to serve these facilities is a fire hazard that threatens surrounding homes. Add to that the volatile chemicals used in the illegal grow houses and you have an explosive situation that could endanger an entire neighborhood."

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is urged to contact Detective Nathan Asbury at (951) 353-7215 or nasbury@riversideca.gov. Those wishing to remain anonymous can email rpdtips@riversideca.gov or utilize the Riverside Police Department's mobile app "Submit a Tip" feature while referencing incident number 190005549.





190005549