



BRADLEY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BRADLEY COUNTY JUSTICE COMPLEX

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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

10th Judicial Drug Task Force Conducts "Vape" Business Compliance Checks

Cleveland, TN. (November 1, 2024) – On Tuesday, October 29, 2024, the 10th Judicial District Drug Task Force conducted a compliance check of forty-seven local businesses in Bradley, McMinn, Monroe, and Polk County, Tennessee in reference to the sale of Vape and THC products to individuals under the age of twenty-one. As a result of the operation seventeen businesses were found to have violated state law. The Task Force issued a total of thirty-four citations during this operation.

Agencies that assisted the 10th Judicial Drug Task Force in this operation include: Athens Police Department, ATS The Bridge, Bradley County Sheriff's Office, Cleveland Police Department, McMinn County Sheriff's Office, Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Monroe County Prevention and Wellness Coalition, Polk County Sheriff's Office and Sweetwater Police Department.

This initiative underscores our commitment to preventing the illegal sale of these products to minors, as well as ensuring that local businesses adhere to all applicable regulations.

District Attorney General Stephen M. Hatchett is quoted as saying, "The District Attorney's Office and all our law enforcement partners are committed to preventing youth access to Tobacco, Smoking Hemp and Vapor Products. We have received multiple complaints from our community and our schools regarding these products and we have taken proactive action to stop these products from being sold to our youth. We truly appreciate ATS The Bridge and the Monroe County Wellness and Prevention Coalition helping with these enforcement actions. This is notice to any establishments in the 10th Judicial District selling these products that enforcement actions will continue to protect our youth".

Sheriff Steve Lawson stated, "The sale of vapes and THC products to minors is an issue that we take very seriously. We will continue to partner with the 10th Judicial Drug Task Force in these types of investigations. Our ongoing compliance checks are just one way we are holding businesses accountable. I want to assure everyone that we are dedicated to continuing this campaign; to remain vigilant and proactive in our efforts to enforce the law and protect our youth from harmful substances".

Cleveland Police Chief Mark Gibson stated, "This mutual aid effort reflects our comprehensive dedication to holding businesses accountable for compliance with state law, especially when it concerns these types of products that impact our community's well-being. Conducting these investigations ensures that businesses operate within legal boundaries and that any violations are addressed promptly. I am thankful for community law enforcement partnerships that enable us to work together to address these issues and the invaluable

About BCSO

The Bradley County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) is a law enforcement agency serving all residents of Bradley County, Tennessee. The elected sheriff is Steve Lawson, who has held the post since September 2018. John Stone is the current chief deputy. BCSO is located at 2290 Blythe Avenue SE, Cleveland, TN 37311 and can be reached at 423-728-7300 for non-emergency calls.

contributions by ATS The Bridge, who provided funding, and Monroe County Prevention Coalition who provided a needed resource for the success of this operation".

The Bradley County Sheriff's Office, Cleveland Police Department, 10th Judicial Drug Task Force and all our community partners, remain committed to working together to uphold the law and maintain a safe environment for all residents. We urge all businesses to comply with state regulations and prioritize the safety of our community.

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