

CENTER NEWS

HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA

National HIDTA Assistance Center • 11200 N.W. 20th Street, Suite 100 • Miami, Florida 33172

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Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) Drives Hundreds to Vegas!

By Courtney Levine

The Domestic Highway Enforcement initiative recently held its annual nationwide meeting at the Red Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. The NHAC collaborated with the DHE Coordinators and the DHE Chair to assist with the planning and coordination of the event. Following the national ISC Managers meeting on May 10, the DHE meeting took place on May 11-12.

“The National HIDTA Assistance Center coordinates all the logistical and event requirements regarding the nationwide DHE meeting with the assistance of Rocky Stone and Mike Snyders,” says NHAC Training Coordinator/Meeting Planner, Melissa Jimenez.

The NHAC negotiates with the hotel, signs the contract, develops and delivers the meeting announcements, monitors online registrations and hotel reservations, manages onsite registration, and serves as liaison with hotel staff to ensure the success of the event. Thanks to the efforts of the DHE Coordinators, the amount of this year’s participants surpassed all expectations. There were 203 participants in the ISC Managers meeting and close to 400 participants in the DHE meeting.

The nationwide meeting began with opening remarks from Kurt Schmid, the Director of the Chicago HIDTA, followed by keynote speaker Kshemendra Paul from the White House Information Sharing and Access Inter-Agency Policy Committee.



Kshemendra Paul

Mapping Out the Nationwide DHE Meeting

By Courtney Levine

The Nationwide DHE Meeting requires a substantial amount of planning and coordination to make it a success. Rocky Stone and Mike Snyders discuss the process of putting the meeting together.

Q. How do you choose topics for the meeting?

A. First, we determine a “theme” and then build topics around that theme. This year it was *Using Intelligence*, so we attempted to choose topics and briefers that enhanced that focus. That is an effort that takes about four to five months. Sometimes, as with this past meeting, a speaker may at the last minute not be available and someone else backfills or we find another breifer. That can cause the focus to shift a little from our original intent.

Q. How do you determine who and how many people will speak/present at the meeting?

A. In addition to the DHE Coordinators, the DHE Chair and other HIDTA Directors may have speaker recommendations for consideration. We consider all of those and reach out to possible speakers to determine if they are willing and able to present.

Q. Was this the first time the ACLU was invited to speak at a DHE meeting?

A. Yes, in the spirit of transparency and a sincere interest of all views, we decided to invite representatives from the ACLU. We admit there was curiosity by many as to our intent and we are pleased to report the interaction with the ACLU was very positive. There are many complex issues related to proactive law enforcement and civil rights. The two lawyers from the ACLU were very professional and enlightened us not only during the planned speeches, but also during lengthy discussions in the evening.



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After the keynote speech, there was an update on an information sharing initiative, followed by a brief from the Terrorist Screening Center and a DHE panel presentation that showcased the flow of information from a traffic stop through all available intelligence resources.

Arkansas Game and Fish Officer Michael K. Neal gave a riveting speech focusing on officer safety demonstrating heroic reaction in a video that captured him in a Wal-Mart parking lot shootout.

Other presentations included discussions about drug cartels, an update of other transportation modes (rail/air), bulk currency trends and a legal presentation by ACLU lawyers entitled “New Alliances – Civil Libertarians Keep Peace” followed by “bias-free policing” advice from Chicago Attorney Iain Johnston.

NHAC Creates New Survey System DHE Attendees’ Feedback Requested

The NHAC recently designed a user-friendly survey system that will allow HIDTAs to create and send required Case Agent and Strategic Products surveys to PMP. This new survey system also collects responses and puts them into an excel report that can be automatically transferred to the appropriate PMP tables.

The new survey is formatted with questions designed by the PMP committee, so that the HIDTA only needs to complete the required information fields, such as Agent Name, Case Number, and Services Provided, etc. Once the required information is completed, the survey is saved and may be launched immediately by the survey program or held for later launch.

Please note: A survey has been created for the attendees of the recent DHE meeting to gather feedback for improving future meetings. Please complete it as soon as you receive it.

Q. Is there anything that you would change about the meeting?

A. As DHE grows and evolves, we incorporate “lessons learned” from year to year. Many changes are already in the works for next year, such as less general meeting session time, no redundancy of briefing topics from the previous year, and a change in the general flow of the entire meeting. More breakouts with greater choice of ones to attend. Every year we gain new knowledge...timing, flow, speakers, topics, how to evolve the program and make the subjects relevant to attendees....The NHAC will be distributing a follow-up survey to obtain feedback about this year’s meeting which will give participants a chance to weigh in about their likes and dislikes. We’ll discuss their input as we plan for next year.

Q. What is in store for next year’s meeting?

We are developing all of that right now. We are just gathering ideas/brainstorming and will run those by the DHE Chair for approval and start to develop the next year’s meeting. It takes, once a general theme and focus is determined, about six months of work on our part, not to mention the work the NHAC staff contributes to the effort which is considerable. We work very closely with the NHAC to make these meetings a success.

DHE Meeting in the News

“About 400 officers who specialize in highway drug enforcement gathered in Las Vegas in early May...One priority that they talk about at these conferences is sharing intelligence between agencies. ‘A trooper making a stop in Las Vegas can put a message to this entire community within one hour,’ said Jack Killorin, head of HIDTA’s Department of Highway Enforcement.”

**Click on the link to listen to the Fronteras Radio story:
[The Drug War At Home: Hunting Drug Smugglers On U.S. Highways](#)*



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