



Calhoun County Sheriff's Office proud of two recent victories in opioid epidemic on social media

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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HARDIN – Two Calhoun County drug arrests have ended with guilty pleas and sentencing in recent days, according to two Facebook posts from the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office.

Each of the arrests and subsequent pleas was in regards to opioids with one being Fentanyl and the other being heroin. Calhoun County Chief Deputy Sheriff Kyle Jacobs said Calhoun County's heroin issue is similar to nearby counties like Jersey, Greene and Madison per capita. Since Calhoun County has a much smaller population – especially when compared to Madison – the number of cases seems small. Jacobs said the epidemic strikes Calhoun as hard as it does everywhere else, though.



On Oct. 4, 2017, Kyle Dipaolo, 34, of Alton, was arrested around 6 p.m. after the sheriff's office received calls from motorists regarding a vehicle traveling all over the roadway with suspicion the driver may be intoxicated. A deputy located the vehicle and observed it committing a lane violation on State Highway 96 near Kampsville.

Upon the traffic stop, the deputy noticed baggies in plain sight with a strange substance. Dipaolo admitted the substance was heroin and was then arrested.

Dipaolo pleaded guilty on May 8, 2018, and was placed on two years of special 410 Probation, meaning the charges will be dismissed and taken off his record if he completes the probation, which includes completing drug treatment and paying \$2,583 in fines and court costs.

Jacobs said this seemingly light sentence was due to this being Dipaolo's first felony offense.

“Sheriff Bill Heffington is very happy the arrest was made and is happy to see a guilty plea in court,” Jacobs said in the post. “Sheriff Heffington is also happy to see someone get the opportunity to turn their lives around when the court system gives them the chance.”



As previously reported on Riverbender.com, a second arrest for an even more deadly substance – Fentanyl – was conducted on Nov. 4, 2017, at approximately 6:15 p.m. when Sheriff Heffington himself conducted a traffic stop while on patrol near Pohlman Slough in the south end of the county. He observed a vehicle speeding on the Illinois River Road, traveling 67 mph in a 55 mph zone.

The truck was being driven by Dennis Conway, 59, of Vandalia, Illinois. Upon a traffic stop, Heffington found the truck's license plate had been marked by the Illinois Secretary of State as suspended for non-insurance. Jacobs said the truck belonged to an excavating company Conway ran with his son out of Vandalia.

“The proper bail bond procedures for suspended plates in Illinois is a valid Illinois drivers license and a \$100 cash bond, so we placed him under arrest until he could post bond,” Jacobs said.

After the stop and arrests were made, Deputy Kyle Halsey and his canine officer, Django, did a sweep of the vehicle, and Django alerted Halsey to the presence of narcotics. They then found 48 pills in an unmarked pharmaceutical container.

“He said they were his blood pressure meds,” Jacobs said. “In fact, he was very adamant about keeping them with him. We sent them off to the Illinois State Police Lab for analysis, and they came back as Fentanyl.”

Conway pleaded guilty to possession of Fentanyl, a Class 4 Felony, on April 17, 2018. As part of his plea negotiation, Conway was placed on 30 months of probation, with the charge and conviction on his record. He was ordered to complete a drug program and has paid the complete \$4,262 in fines and court costs.

“Sheriff Bill Heffington is very happy to see such a dangerous drug removed from the Calhoun community, and also is very happy that an arrest was made and a guilty plea was reached in court,” Jacobs said on the Facebook post. “Sheriff Heffington is also very happy that we have an asset like Deputy Django to help protect Calhoun. Sheriff Heffington wants the citizens of Calhoun to know that Django is very valuable to the community and, although some people may not think we need a drug dog, unfortunately, in this day and age, a drug dog is a necessity. Once people stop bringing drugs into Calhoun, maybe the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office will consider retiring Django, but until then, Django is going to keep doing what he does.”