
Report on Implementation of
the Missoula Marijuana Initiative
(Initiative 2)

Report #4

Covering January 1st through June 30th, 2009

Released March 2010

Available at www.co.missoula.mt.us/initiative2

Introduction:

In November 2006, Missoula County voters passed Initiative 2 by a vote of 55%. The initiative recommended that government officials treat adult marijuana offenses as the lowest priority, and established a Community Oversight Committee charged with publishing a semi-annual report evaluating the initiative's implementation.

In this, our fourth report, we reviewed government data on marijuana incidents in Missoula County that occurred from January 1st, 2009 through June 30th, 2009. Law enforcement officials reported, on average, encountering an adult with marijuana every single day in this time period.

In this report, due to time constraints, our volunteer committee will report solely on law enforcement encounters involving marijuana in Missoula County.

Information Sources:

We received three spreadsheets from local officials:

- An automated export of public information from the Missoula County Sheriff's Department, containing time, location, demographic, and evidence information.
- An automated export of public information from the University of Montana's Office of Public Safety, containing time, location, and disposition information.
- A human-prepared spreadsheet based on automated export of public information from the Missoula Police Department, including time, location, demographic, and evidence information, as well as an indication of whether medical marijuana was involved, and the reason for initial officer contact. The Committee greatly appreciates the additional work that went into preparing these data.

What follows is a brief analysis of these data.

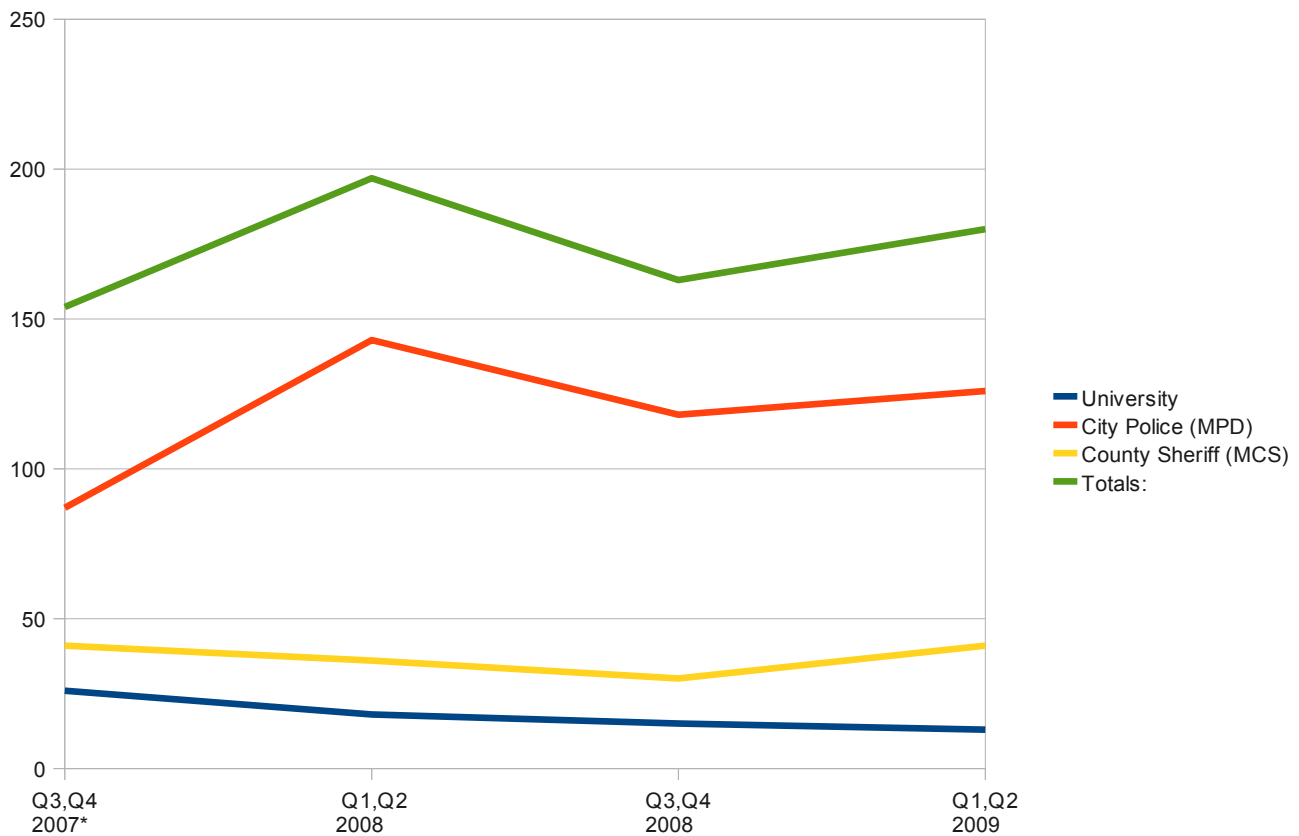
Findings:

Appending our new information to that which has been presented in our previous reports, marijuana incident trends are as follows:

Marijuana Incidents Reported by Missoula Law Enforcement

Entity/Dept	Q3,Q4 2007*	Q1,Q2 2008	Q3,Q4 2008	Q1,Q2 2009
University	26	18	15	13
City Police (MPD)	87	143	118	126
County Sheriff (MCS)	41	36	30	41
Totals:	154	197	163	180

*2007 numbers are based on the annualized estimates provided in our 2007 report.



Other findings:

Median seizure weight in city among incidents in which the weight of marijuana is recorded: **3.7g**

Median age of individuals involved in marijuana incidents in both city and county: **24**

Number of individuals involved in 126 city incidents in six months: **155**

For the first time we received a summary of the reason for each city incident. The most common reasons for marijuana to be encountered by the Missoula Police Department in the Jan-Jun 2009 period were:

1. Traffic Stop (25%)
2. DUI (15%)
3. Disorderly Conduct (7%)
4. Domestic Disturbance (5%)
5. Open Container (4%)
6. Trespassing (4%)
7. Public Marijuana Use (4%)
8. Noise Complaint (3%)
9. Theft Investigation (3%)
10. Warrants (3%)

Reasons that occurred just one or two times included people turning in their roommates for marijuana, 911 calls about marijuana from a property management company and an employer, assault, burglary, Crimestoppers tips, sexual assault, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area tips, investigative stops for suspicious activities, found property, peeping person, medical assistance, and endangering the welfare of children.

9% of individuals involved in MPD marijuana incidents were of Native American/Indian ethnicity, and 4.4% were black.

Nearly 15% (6 of 41) of MCS marijuana incidents involved persons of Native American/Indian ethnicity.

According to the 2006 census, 2.6% of county residents are Native American/Indian, and 0.7% are black.

24% of MCS incidents involved women, compared to 23% of MPD incidents.

MPD continues to be responsible for recording the majority (70%) of all marijuana incidents, 98% of which resulted in misdemeanor charges.

MPD recorded two incidents involving medical marijuana; we received no data from MCS on this topic.

Conclusion:

Patterns noted in previous reports continue. While marijuana incidents comprise a very small proportion of law enforcement encounters, officials seize marijuana nearly every day in Missoula County. The vast majority of marijuana incidents involve young people with small amounts, and non-whites are disproportionately involved.

Receiving data from MPD concerning the reasons for each incident was a great help and confirmed what was previously merely anecdotal: police are unlikely to encounter marijuana without having some other reason for contact, and traffic stops/DUI constitute a substantial portion (40%) of all marijuana incidents. Most of the other marijuana encounters resulted from investigations of other crimes.

Submitted respectfully this 23rd day of March, 2010, by the Initiative 2 Community Oversight Committee:

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