



Pueblo County Sheriff's Office

Kirk M. Taylor Sheriff
J.R. Hall Undersheriff

Mark A. Mears
Bureau Chief
Emergency Services

David J. Lucero
Bureau Chief
Detention

Jeffrey S. Teschner
Bureau Chief
Law Enforcement

News Release

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Detention Deputies Find Heroin on Jail Inmate

Pueblo, CO: The persistent work of Pueblo County Sheriff's detention deputies in investigating a report of possible drugs in the facility led to the recovery Tuesday of more than 14 grams of heroin that had been hidden in the body cavity of an inmate.

Deputies learned through a tip that there were possibly drugs in one of the housing areas of the Pueblo County Jail. Deputies conducted an initial search of the housing area but did not find anything. K9s Mondy and Edo and their handlers responded to the jail and conducted another search where the K9s indicated drug possible detection in several locations within the housing unit. Detention deputies conducted further searches in those areas along with pat searches of several inmates tied to those areas.

One of the inmates, identified as possibly having hid drugs in his body, was removed from the housing area and taken through the jail's body scanner. The inmate, identified as Joe Vasquez, 47, was placed in a holding cell pending the review of the body scan. While waiting in the holding cell, deputies noticed Vasquez was acting suspicious. Deputies entered the cell and found a plastic bag in the toilet. Deputies also observed a black substance on Vasquez's hands and his leg. Deputies had Vasquez remove his pants and while doing so, a black rock-like substance fell to the floor. The substance tested positive for heroin.

Vasquez admitted to deputies he had swallowed a baggy of heroin prior to being arrested on May 20. He said he finally passed the baggy while he was in the holding cell.

Vasquez, who was already in jail on a drug possession charge (methamphetamine), received additional charges of first-degree introduction of contraband, possession of a controlled substance, first degree possession of contraband and unlawful distribution, manufacturing, dispensing or sale. He remains in the Pueblo County Jail.

"I commend the deputies involved in this incident for their thorough investigative work," said Pueblo County Sheriff Kirk M. Taylor. "Their persistent work kept a pretty substantial amount of heroin out of the jail."

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