

Many of you are aware that during this past legislative session, the State of Georgia banned synthetic marijuana such as K-2, or Spice. This came as a result of serious medical issues, and even death occurred in several cases in which young people in Georgia experimented with the drug. The chemicals used in the drug are intended to mimic the THC found in marijuana. One of the major problems with these drugs is the fact that the chemicals' effects are sometimes thousands of times that of marijuana. These chemicals are extremely dangerous and parents need to be aware that young people are being targeted by the manufacturers of these chemicals. They are often marketed as "legal," "safe," versions of marijuana. The fact is, these chemicals are anything but safe.

Recently, law enforcement officers in Georgia have started to encounter new variations of K-2 spice-type drugs that may not be covered under the latest revisions of the law. The illicit manufacturers of these drugs have been working to change their formula in an attempt to side step the new law and in some cases may have succeeded. When the new law was first enacted, the Towns County Sheriff's Office visited businesses to make sure they were aware of the law. I am receiving information that now the manufacturers are in fact attempting to offer their new version as a legal substitute.

Unfortunately, these new drugs are not different analogs of the compounds covered in the law; rather, they have a completely different basic structure. Once these drugs were banned in other states, the distributors of these drugs moved elsewhere, but it appears that these distributors intend to continue to sell these dangerous products in Georgia by changing the ingredients.

The Department of Forensic Sciences laboratory staff is in the process of identifying these compounds. Sheriff Clinton stated, "Our office will be in full cooperation with the other sheriffs, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and Department of Forensic Sciences. We will continue to work with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to update the Controlled Substances Act. The bottom line is this: these illicit manufacturers are endangering the lives of countless Georgians and that just isn't acceptable!"

Anyone with any questions, concerns, or who would like more information about these drugs and their potentially deadly effects may contact the Towns County Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444, or on the web at www.townscountysheriffsoffice.com. We will be happy to speak to you and get you all the information you need to help protect our young people from these and other dangerous drugs.