



Lee County Sheriff's Office S.C. Department of Corrections

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For immediate release

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BISHOPVILLE, S.C. – An eight-month investigation into drone attacks at Lee Correctional Institution has resulted in 20 arrests and more than 100 pounds of contraband confiscated in frequent nighttime assaults on the Bishopville prison.

The latest arrests occurred this weekend, when Lee County Sheriff's officers arrested five people in two separate, unrelated groups attempting to fly drones carrying contraband over the prison fences.

"Our main focus is to stop contraband from entering the institution, and especially prevent someone from getting injured in the process," Lee County Sheriff Daniel Simon said. "We formed this partnership years ago, working hand in hand with each other to keep the inmates and the public safe."

The investigation began in May 2021, with eight arrests being made through August. The 2022 arrests were all in January. Lee Correctional is just outside the city limits of Bishopville, a small town near Interstate 20. Law enforcement officers work together to combat the frequent drone attacks.

"My officers are ready and willing to assist the sheriff's office any time, especially when it involves the drone activity and contraband at the prison," Bishopville Police Chief J.D. Dellinger said.

As drone technology gets more sophisticated, law enforcement continues to improve efforts and techniques to stop contraband packages from reaching the hands of inmates.

"I'm grateful for the partnership we have with Lee County and the hard work their officers do to keep contraband from entering the institution," SCDC Director Bryan Stirling said.

The recent seizures at Lee include:

- About 100 pounds of tobacco
- About 13 pounds of marijuana
- About 843 grams of methamphetamines
- About 114 grams of crack cocaine
- About 49 grams of cocaine
- 25 cellphones
- Two knives
- Three guns
- 12 drones
- \$6,393 in cash
- Packages also included numerous charging cords, lighters, bottles of liquor, cand and clothing items.

Officers also have found three abandoned drones containing about five pounds of tobacco and 100 grams of meth in the woods near the prison fences.

In the most recent incident, two unrelated groups of people were both trying to fly drones over the yard at the same time. Simon said one of those drones was the largest he's ever seen.

"These large drones can carry heavier and heavier packages," Simon said. "We are working hard to stop them from getting in the wrong hands."

Charges from Sunday's incidents include:

- Morrell Godbolt of Marion: Contraband and criminal conspiracy
- Anthony Bullard of Sumter: Contraband and criminal conspiracy
- Buddy Berry Jr. of Greenville: Contraband and criminal conspiracy
- Hezekiah Brown of Marion: Contraband and criminal conspiracy
- Divine Scott of Sumter: Contraband, criminal conspiracy and failure to stop for a blue light.

Other arrests in 2022 include:

- Cherish Lightner of Columbia: Trafficking in methamphetamines, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime, trafficking in cocaine, trafficking cocaine base, contraband and failure to stop for a blue light.
- Christopher Lovely of Sumter: Contraband, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, trafficking in methamphetamines and criminal conspiracy.
- Ashanta Bradley of Rembert: Contraband, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, trafficking in methamphetamines and criminal conspiracy.
- Tywuan Ford of Round O: Contraband, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, trafficking in methamphetamines, criminal conspiracy and failure to stop for a blue light.
- Thomas Holbrooks of Gaston: Contraband and trespassing.
- Shia Young of Yemassee: Possession of a sawed-off rifle.

- Cody Pearson of Rock Hill: Contraband, criminal conspiracy, trafficking in methamphetamines, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and trafficking cocaine.

Arrests in 2021 include:

- Devin Barksdale of Easley: Barksdale was arrested in two different raids. Charges include Trafficking methamphetamines, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, contraband and criminal conspiracy.
- Rashell Tracy of Spartanburg: Contraband and criminal conspiracy.
- David Herrington of Easley: Contraband and criminal conspiracy.
- Michael Mijares of Pelion: Possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, trafficking methamphetamines and criminal conspiracy.
- Marcille Glover of Columbia: Possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, trafficking methamphetamines, criminal conspiracy and unlawful conduct towards a child.
- Richard Marushia of West Columbia: Possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, trafficking methamphetamines and criminal conspiracy.
- Yah'Quann Gantt of Columbia: trafficking methamphetamines and unlawfully carrying a pistol.
- Kolin Frazier of Easley: Trafficking methamphetamines and possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.