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UDC and US Marshals Highlight Relationship Noting 183 High Profile Fugitives Apprehended in 2020

The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) and the US Marshals Services'(USMS) Violent Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team (VFAST) made 183 high profile arrests in 2020. All of these cases were referred by the UDC.

"As a Department our top priority is public safety while working to help individuals successfully exit the criminal justice system," said Dan Blanchard, Director of Adult Probation and Parole (AP&P), a division within the Utah Department of Corrections. "Our highly trained and capable agents work to help offenders be successful and accountable for their actions."

UDC has partnered with VFAST to locate and apprehend fugitive parolees and probationers for more than seven years. UDC provides significant resources toward these efforts with 24 agents assigned to VFAST within Utah including one full time member.

"Adult Probation and Parole is one of the twenty-eight statewide law enforcement partners that participate in VFAST," said Matthew D. Harris, United States Marshal for Utah. "Over half of the state and local warrants served by our task force are brought to us by AP&P agents. This illustrates the importance of leveraging state, local and federal resources and partnerships to tackle violent crime. The public is served best when law enforcement focuses its efforts on criminals with active felony warrants before they strike again."

AP&P and allied law enforcement agencies have apprehended hundreds of fugitives over the past few years. An additional 31 AP&P officers participate in several multijurisdictional task force teams across the state.

"We appreciate the support and collaboration of other law enforcement agencies in apprehending high profile offenders in the community," Blanchard said.

In addition to automated data sharing between public safety databases, UDC has on-call supervisors available to law enforcement for information on probationers or parolees and incident response collaboration. Agents make arrests and request warrants as needed, including if individuals abscond from probation or parole supervision.

To report a tip on a fugitive who is on probation or parole, contact the AP&P fugitive unit at cr-fugitives@utah.gov. This does not pertain to situations where you or the safety of others may be in question, please contact your local law enforcement.

Below is a list of four offenders apprehended recently through fugitive investigations, information sharing and intelligence developed by the task force team.

- Raul Aguilar Flores was on parole for burglary. He absconded on February 1, 2021, and was taken into custody by VFAST and AP&P on May 4, 2021. On May 12, 2021, he was charged with a new theft offense in 3rd District Court.

- Erik Roland Bertelsen was on parole for kidnapping and assault by prisoner. He absconded on April 28, 2021, and was taken into custody by VFAST and AP&P on April 30, 2021.

- Arthur Wayne Najera was on parole for burglary, possession of dangerous weapon, theft and drug distribution offenses. He absconded on June 30, 2020. On February 24, 2021, he was charged with new offenses in 3rd District Court with aggravated kidnapping and aggravated sexual assault. On March 3, 2021, he was taken into custody by VFAST in Fredonia, Arizona.

- Hailey Ann Magera was on felony probation for tampering with a witness and assault domestic violence. She absconded on December 9, 2020. On January 8, 2021, she was charged with new offenses in 3rd District Court with aggravated assault, violation of protective order and wrongful appropriation. She was taken into custody by VFAST and AP&P on February 12, 2021.