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Tech, Teamwork, and K-9 Team Up to Stop Drug-Infused Paper from Entering State Prisons via mail

Salt Lake City, UT — The Utah Department of Corrections' (UDC) recent investment in technology, law enforcement professionals, and drug-sniffing K-9s have paid off with the arrest of a woman suspected of planning to mail hundreds of sheets of drug-infused paper to individuals housed at Utah's correctional facilities, the Utah State Correctional Facility in Salt Lake City, and the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison.

Julie Rae Sawyer, age 48, of Magna, is currently in the Salt Lake County jail, charged with two first-degree felony charges of distribution of a controlled substance and one second-degree felony charge of possession with intent to distribute.

"UDC's investment in law enforcement tools has paid off," said Jared Garcia, UDC's Executive Director. "This arrest proves the value of our new surveillance technology in monitoring calls, detecting illegal substances, and holding those responsible accountable. Smuggling contraband is unacceptable, and this is evidence we are serious about stopping it."

Garcia added, "If you are caught bringing, sending, introducing, or conspiring to introduce contraband into our facilities, you are actively compromising safety and interrupting opportunities for people to rehabilitate. We will save a cell and bed for you."

Using the evidence obtained through surveillance, the illegal paper was traced to Sawyer. UDC investigators obtained a search warrant for her home in Magna, and narcotics-specialized K-9's confirmed the drug-infused papers. UDC mailroom staff also detected the paper at UDC facilities. A search of Sawyer's home uncovered more of the contraband paper there.

For the last two years, the UDC's Law Enforcement Bureau has strengthened its efforts through the use of modern technology, specialized training for agents and officers, and the strategic use of K-9 units. Efforts are paying off by intercepting drugs before they reach UDC facilities.