



IPRC CONNECTIONS

National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

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Local traffic stops lead to counterfeit drugs, illicit goods worth millions



The internet describes a traffic stop, commonly called being “pulled over,” as a temporary detention of a driver of a vehicle by police to investigate a possible crime or minor violation of law. At the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center), a traffic stop by state and local law enforcement authorities is viewed as a potential opportunity to work with federal law enforcement agencies in the fight against counterfeit merchandise and illicit goods.

“We place a high priority on our outreach and training programs that involve state and local officers, detectives, prosecutors, and their federal partners to provide them with information on IPR Center support, federal and state IP laws, investigative techniques and tools, and product identification,” said IPR Center Director Steve Francis. “We value the partnerships with state and local authorities that have been created by the training courses we’ve conducted cooperatively with them not only here in the U.S., but also worldwide.”

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In Arizona, for example, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Yuma special agents arrested an individual and seized more than five pounds of methamphetamine with a street value of approximately \$7 million. The arrest and seizure occurred after a traffic enforcement operation conducted by officers with the San Luis Police Department, where police also seized several pounds of high-grade marijuana, an AR15-style rifle, multiple cell phones and a large sum of cash. Here’s the full story: [Illicit Goods Seized](#)

In Sacramento, California, a traffic stop led to the discovery of nearly 15,000 fentanyl-laced counterfeit oxycodone pills that began an investigation by the Tri-County Drug Enforcement Team, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and the California Highway Patrol. Here’s the story: [Sacramento Traffic Stop](#)

IPR Center brings outreach within reach of 30,000 stakeholders

If you’ve ever wondered what 30,000 people look like, take a look at the full house at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis, Md., and you’ll understand how many stakeholders the IPR Center has reached over the last two years as part of its outreach and training efforts.



“We’ll never seize or arrest our way out of intellectual property rights-related crimes,” said IPR Center Outreach & Training Section Chief John McNair. “We have to be proactive in our engagement by not only bringing stakeholders to us, but going to them to strengthen the existing partnerships and being open to new and innovative ways to engage.”

The IPR Center conducted more than 300 foreign and domestic intellectual property rights and commercial fraud training events in fiscal year 2017, reaching more than 14,000 participants. Domestic training events included the IPR Center’s counterfeit awareness, mitigation, identification, and reporting training. In fiscal year 2018, the IPR Center conducted more than 300 foreign and domestic IPR and commercial fraud training events, reaching more than 16,000 participants.

“Education is the key to changing behavior. We’ve seen this play out in so many other areas,” said McNair. “It starts with bringing the stakeholders engaged in this effort to the table to discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist. From there, we partner to take a cohesive message to the public around these issues.”

Task force examines issues of forced labor

Representatives from eight federal departments and agencies gathered at the IPR Center where Director Steve Francis welcomed them at a Chinese Prison Labor Task Force meeting. The task force, established by the Normal Trade Relations for the People's Republic of China (PRC) Act of 2000, provided a forum for the discussion of a variety of issues regarding prison labor with an eye toward identifying a willingness among agencies to share information on the many forms of forced labor. For more information on the story, please visit the IPR Center website, www.iprcenter.gov, and click on "Newsroom."

IPR Center hosts IPTEI course for HSI, CBP personnel

Africa Bell, acting director of Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Enforcement Operations Division addressed import specialists, officers, regulatory auditors and HSI special agents who gathered at the IPR Center for the start of the Intellectual Property and Trade Enforcement Investigation (IPTEI) course. The two-week training curriculum focused on intellectual property rights and trade fraud detection and investigations. Class coordinator Nadine Andrews says the popular training course is in its third year at the IPR Center for HSI and CBP personnel.



Europol recognized for its work as a valued IPR Center partner



IPR Center Director Steve Francis delivered remarks at the 2019 Europol IP Crime Conference in Malaga, Spain, saying "conferences like this provide a vital platform which allows public and private sector organizations to share best practices, develop new tools and create stronger partnerships with EUROPOL and Spanish National Police." Francis also acknowledged the vital role Europol has played as one of five international partners at the IPR Center, including INTERPOL, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, City of London Police and the United Kingdom.

"With the support of its 28-member nations and other international partners, Europol is a global force against transnational criminal activity of all types," said Francis. "I am proud to call them a partner as, year after year, they continue to be one of the more active partners even though we sit on different continents."

The two-day conference provided an opportunity to collaborate with brands, law enforcement, global industry leaders, and governments on the fight against counterfeiting and piracy.

Pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, cyber crimes top training agenda in Vienna

The IPR Center provided intellectual property enforcement training to customs officials, police investigators, prosecutors and regulatory officials from Bosnia, Herzegovina, the Kyrgyzstan Republic, Serbia, Tajikistan and Turkey. The training was scheduled as one regional course in Vienna, Austria.

A total of 40 participants attended the workshop that featured HSI case-study presentations on pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, luxury goods and cellular telephones, as well as an online investigations presentation by an HSI cyber-crimes expert. Europol also provided a presentation about International Partnership Against IP Crime.



Did you know...

the theft of intellectual property is costing the United States and its companies \$300 billion a year, according to the 2019 Annual Intellectual Property Report to Congress, which also reveals the estimated Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of the seized goods – had they been genuine – totaled \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 2017.



The IPR Center encourages companies and private industry organizations to help fight (IP) theft and trade law violations by displaying the "Report IP Theft" button on websites that will link users with a form to detail their allegations. For more information on how to obtain this tool, please visit our website: <https://www.iprcenter.gov>

For more information on these stories, or to submit information for stories in future editions of IPRC Connections, please contact Chuck Jackson, charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov, or (703) 603-3941. In the meantime, please follow us on Twitter: [@IPRCenter](https://twitter.com/IPRCenter).