



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Attorney General
Richmond 23219

Jerry W. Kilgore
Attorney General

900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
804-786-2071
804-371-8947 TDD

For Release: Wednesday, June 9, 2004

Website: www.vaag.com

Contact: Tim Murtaugh or Tucker Martin

Phone: (804) 786-3518 or (804) 786-4596

E-Mail: tmurtaugh@oag.state.va.us or jmartin@oag.state.va.us

Kilgore Announces “Virginia Meth Watch” --Preventive Partnership between Attorney General and Retail Merchants—

Richmond- Virginia Attorney General Jerry Kilgore today announced a proactive partnership between retail merchants in Virginia and the Office of The Attorney General to combat the growing problem of methamphetamine production and distribution throughout the Commonwealth. The partnership was announced at a press conference held in the State Capitol this afternoon.

The Attorney General delivered his remarks from a podium situated directly behind a table holding various ingredients needed to make methamphetamine. The items were purchased by the Attorney General’s staff this morning at Richmond area convenience stores. This easy purchase of the requisite ingredients for the manufacture of meth demonstrates the problem facing law enforcement and retail merchants in the state, and highlights the need for education and awareness in the battle against meth in Virginia.

The Attorney General noted the problem Virginia faces remarking, “This is not a display meant to make our stores look bad, but rather an example of just how easy it is to acquire the ingredients needed to make this dangerous and addictive substance. We cannot prevent these items from being sold, but we can work to educate clerks and others on what to look for and what to report. A customer buying some cold medicine is normal, a customer buying a case of it in addition to drain cleaner, coffee filters, and allergy tablets should be a signal to that clerk that something is amiss, and that action should be taken.”

Increasing awareness is a critical necessity to combating the incipient meth threat in Virginia. As of May of this year police in Virginia have already exceeded the amount of meth labs they discovered in all of 2003. Though the threat found its original base in the mountains of western Virginia, it is increasingly expanding to the cities and towns of central and eastern Virginia.

Attorney General Kilgore touched upon the increasing spread of meth in Virginia when he pointed out, “While the issue (meth) is one that is especially prevalent in western Virginia, we are now seeing distribution spread across the state. For these reasons this partnership represents a critical step in both raising awareness that meth is in Virginia, as well as moving to disrupt and destroy its production and distribution.”

The partnership is a voluntary, retail based approach that is designed to deter local production and facilitate communication between retailers and law enforcement. Some of the steps contained within this voluntary program include video training and other forms of worker education on the issue, the implementation of standardized forms to report suspicious transactions, the limiting of display shelf quantities of some items used for the manufacture of meth, as well as cash register blocks and other storeroom precautions.

Attorney General Kilgore was joined at the press conference by representatives of many retailers and associations at today's event. The following organizations all had officials in attendance in a demonstration of their support of "Virginia Meth Watch": Costco; Food Lion, Inc.; Southern States Co-Operative; Ukrops Supermarkets, Inc; Walgreens; Virginia Retail Merchants Association; Virginia Pharmacists Association; Eckerd; and 7-Eleven, Inc. In addition to organizations with representatives in attendance other retailers and associations that have signed on to the program include: Edloe's Professional Pharmacy; Giant Food Stores; Target; Wal-Mart Stores, Inc; Virginia Association of Chain Drug Stores; and the Virginia Petroleum and Convenience Grocery Association.