

NewsLibrary

Estimated printed pages: 2

Long Beach Press-Telegram (CA)

September 26, 2003

Edition: AM

Section: NEWS

Page: A2

**16 MEN ARRESTED IN JOHNS STING L.B.: 14 VEHICLES SEIZED WEDNESDAY AS ANTIPROSTITUTION OPERATIONS CONTINUE.**

Author: *Kristopher Hanson*

*Staff writer*

Dateline: LONG BEACH

Article Text:

Police **arrested 16 men** and impounded **14 vehicles** late **Wednesday** during a **sting** operation targeting people who solicit prostitutes.

Detectives have impounded 106 **vehicles** and **arrested** 126 people since the inception **in** June of a citywide ordinance requiring **vehicles** involved **in** prostitution-related offenses to be impounded for 30 days, police said.

First-time offenders typically are fined \$300 or required to perform 80 hours of community service. They also are forced to take an HIV test, attend an AIDS awareness class and are placed on a 3-year summary probation, said Noel Hacegaba, a spokesman for the Long Beach city prosecutor's office.

Repeat offenders are sentenced to at least 45 days **in** jail on top of increased fines, Hacegaba said.

The john **sting** occurred along a stretch of Pacific Coast Highway near Gladys Avenue bordering Signal Hill. Officers **arrested 16 men** who solicited Long Beach Police Officers posing as prostitutes.

The **14 vehicles** were towed to local yards, where they will be available for their owners **in** late October.

Vehicle owners can be exempted from the impound if they prove extreme hardship, such as an inability to perform their job without their vehicle.

The john **sting** is the latest **in** a series of ongoing undercover operations against prostitution **in** Long Beach, which officials say contributes to the spread of disease, violence against women, drug abuse and other social ills.

Police have conducted similar operations throughout the city recently and promise more **in** the weeks and months to come, warning people to resist any temptation to pick up prostitutes.

``We're doing these operations **in** every division **in** the city," Sgt. Tim Ferrill said. ``If you want to pick up prostitutes, go to another city. Don't do it **in** Long Beach."``

Caption:

Six of the **14 vehicles** impounded by police **Wednesday** night during a prostitution **sting** sit **in** a lot. The six consist of three Toyotas, one Chevrolet, one Dodge and one Lexus.

Brittany Murray / Press-Telegram

Copyright (c) 2003 Press-Telegram

Record Number: 0309300186