



Saint Louis County

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Ross Litman
Sheriff

NEWS RELEASE

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Lights, other equipment seized from drug operations donated to Bay Produce

Lights and other equipment originally purchased to grow marijuana are now being put to a better, legal use: growing tomatoes and expanding job opportunities for people with developmental disabilities at Bay Produce, a division of Challenge Center in Superior. Representatives of Bay Produce and the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office will hold a news conference to talk about this unique partnership on Thursday, April 3, at 10:30 a.m., at the Bay Produce facility, 39 North 25th Street East in Superior. A tour of the greenhouse where the lights are now being used will be available immediately following the news conference.

The lights and other equipment, including timers, cords and fertilizer were seized by sheriff's deputies as part of several narcotics investigations between 2009 and 2012. Some of the equipment was brand new and had not even been removed from the boxes.

Forfeited items seized in drug cases typically are auctioned off, but law enforcement wanted to ensure these items wouldn't again end up used for growing drugs. That's how the idea came about to donate them to the Challenge Center for use in the Bay Produce greenhouses, which grow tomatoes, peppers and basil.

The Challenge Center is a non-profit organization that offers group homes and creative work environments, including Bay Produce, for people with developmental disabilities. The donation of the lights has allowed Bay Produce to add one extra growing cycle in its greenhouses. Tomatoes were planted under the new lights last December and are just about ready to be harvested.

"Our priority in drug investigations is to stop the supply and bring to justice the people who are growing and dealing drugs. To be able to then put their equipment to good use like what's being done at Bay Produce, is a great bonus for our community," said Ross Litman, St. Louis County Sheriff.

For more information about Challenge Center and Bay Produce, visit challenge-center.org or call Work Services Director Debra Gergen at (715) 394-2771. More information about the work of the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office is available online at stlouiscountymn.gov/sheriff or by calling (218) 726-2341.

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