

# Trafficking Colorado's pot to neighboring states

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Life in Cheyenne County, Kansas, is more about cows than cannabis, but now this part of the Old West is on the frontline of marijuana's new frontier. Pot is legal in nearby Colorado, but when it leaves the state, it often travels across Kansas' remote highways, reports CBS News correspondent Barry Petersen.

"We can't ignore the marijuana. It's just hard to justify pulling resources away from things like this to put them on the highway to just strictly find marijuana coming in from Colorado," said Sheriff Cody Beeson.

A recent study found that nearly half of all marijuana purchases in Colorado are made by out-of-state visitors. Under federal law, that marijuana has to remain within Colorado's borders.

In 2013 the federal Rocky Mountain High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas calculated 288 cars smuggling Colorado marijuana beyond state lines. That may not seem like much, but experts estimate that they are only catching 10 percent. Meaning 90 percent of illegal trafficking is going unnoticed.

"We've documented forty different states that it's gone to," said Tom Gorman, the agency's director.

Gorman has spent his whole life as a cop in this battle, and he said the situation makes him "damn uncomfortable."

"Either we're a country of the laws, or were not," Gorman said.

A car crash last year in Sheriff Beeson's county left an injured driver -- and marijuana everywhere. It was not just the sheriff on the clock, but all the county's first responders.

"EMS arrived on scene, fire arrived on scene. We helped with the injured individual," Beeson said.

The reality is, however, the taxpayers of Cheyenne County, Kansas, are paying for what's happening in Colorado.

"Whether it's through the prosecution or the arrest or even -- like I said, time is money," Beeson said. "When you're paying a deputy by the hour, he's not getting another job you want done that serve the community. He's working on this issue."

Deputies now carry testing kits they can drop suspected marijuana into to get a quick result; a pinkish purple result means they've found pot.

But on patrol, arrest is not the only answer in a cash-strapped county of fewer than 3,000. Sometimes, it's more beneficial to let someone go after the sheriff confiscates the small amount of marijuana found, if they don't pose a threat, Beeson said.

In small town Cheyenne County, opinions vary on using Kansas public funds to chase Colorado pot.

Resident Dostin Wiley told CBS News that the case is simple; "If somebody's trafficking drugs," he argues, the police should stop them.

Lester Cress, however, told us he'd rather see his state's money spent at home, protecting his family.