



HARRISON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

TROY J. PETERSON
SHERIFF

P.O. BOX 1480 ♦ GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI 39502 ♦ 228-896-0606

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

For Immediate Release

On Wednesday, November 20, 2019, Harrison County Sheriff Troy Peterson announced the arrest of 36-year-old Esteban Bernardina-Betancourt of San Antonio, TX for felony charges of trafficking methamphetamine.

On Monday, November 18, 2019, a Harrison County Sheriff's Office Deputy conducted a traffic stop on a white Dodge pick-up on I-10 eastbound near the 20 mile marker for following too close to another vehicle. The driver, identified was Esteban Bernardina-Betancourt.

Upon speaking to Betancourt, Deputies observed the bed of the truck to be filled with dirt and gravel concealing buckets and PVC piping. During the course of the investigation, and a subsequent search of the vehicle, Deputies discovered the buckets and PVC piping to contain numerous one-pound packages of methamphetamine. In all, Deputies recovered 140, one-pound packages of Methamphetamine with an estimated street value in excess of a million dollars.

Bernardina-Betancourt is charged with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and remanded into federal custody by the Drug Enforcement Administration. Bernardina-Betancourt is being held at the Harrison County Sheriff's Office Adult Detention Center awaiting an initial appearance before a federal magistrate in the U.S. Circuit Court in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Investigative Officer: Harrison County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Sergeant Robert Drace

Arresting Officer(s): Harrison County Sheriff's Office Deputy Joshua Macko

Approved For Release: _____
Troy J. Peterson, Sheriff, Harrison County, Mississippi