

Residents on same street charged with marijuana cultivation

Two local residents living at separate houses on the same street were both charged with cultivating marijuana Wednesday.

Joann Eckstein, 51, of 288 Elmwood Drive, and Chris Baumholser, 55, of 292 Elmwood Drive, were arrested on drug charges.

After numerous potted marijuana plants were seen on Eckstein's porch, the METRICH Enforcement Unit secured a warrant to search her home. They had received numerous complaints about drug activity in the area, according to a Mansfield Police report.

During the search, around 3:40 p.m. Wednesday, officers uncovered a marijuana cultivation operation, the report said.



Detectives seized 14 mature marijuana plants and over 1,000 grams of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$5,000 from Eckstein's home. They also found \$1,979 in cash, a loaded .38 caliber Smith & Wesson handgun, two 12 gauge shotguns, one 20 gauge shotgun, one .22 caliber handgun, one .22 caliber rifle, and marijuana cultivation equipment.

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Eckstein was charged with possession of marijuana, a third-degree felony. Additional charges will be forwarded to the Richland County Prosecutors Office for review. She remains in jail, pending a court appearance, according to the report.

A neighboring resident was also charged.

METRICH officers said complaints also led them to Baumholser's home. He consented to a home search, the report said.

Officers retrieved marijuana, cultivation materials and other drug paraphernalia from his home. He was charged with cultivation and possession of marijuana.

METRICH Lt. Joy Stortz applauded citizens reporting suspicious drug activity in their neighborhood, which resulted in a significant amount of drugs and weapons being removed from the community.

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