



## **Active Meth Lab Found In Home With Children**

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LONDON – Law enforcement officers investigating the possible manufacturing of methamphetamine found three young children sleeping next to a room where an active lab was located on Wednesday.

After being decontaminated by Operation UNITE and the Laurel County Division of Public Safety those children, along with three other school-age children who also live at the Keavy Road home in Laurel County, were taken to the St. Joseph-London hospital before being turned over to Social Services.

The children, between the ages of 1 and 10 years old, were given clean clothes and toys donated to UNITE by the Pine Hill Baptist Church Vacation Bible School class.

Arrested were 57-year-old John Balusik and his two grandchildren, 24-year-old Clyde Shepherd and 19-year-old Brandy Balusik, all of Keavy Road. Each was charged with one count of manufacturing methamphetamine and six counts controlled substance child endangerment.

In addition, John Balusik was arrested on a warrant for unlawful possession of methamphetamine precursors.

Additional arrests are expected as the investigation continues.

UNITE detectives had focused on Balusik after a MethCheck investigation revealed he had purchased a number of items used to make methamphetamine. Based on that information a Laurel County arrest warrant was obtained.

Balusik had been using identification listing two addresses – one in McCreary County and another in Laurel County.

Officers first checked in McCreary County, but learned Balusik had moved out about a year ago. They subsequently determined he no longer lived at the Laurel County address. Through their investigation officers found his current home.

When detectives arrived at the residence they served the arrest warrant, and asked permission to search the property. Balusik said they could look around outside, but denied access to the house.

After finding items outside that indicated methamphetamine had been produced, officers had enough probable cause to secure a search warrant for the house.

Inside they located methamphetamine in the process of being made in one bedroom, along with lye, ammonia nitrate, lithium batteries and other items associated with meth production throughout the home. During the investigation they also found evidence of two inactive labs in a garbage pile.

Three children, ages 1-4, were discovered in an adjoining bedroom. The other children, ages 6-10, were taken into protective custody after they got off the school bus.

Two small house dogs at the residence were removed by the Laurel County Animal Control.

Assisting UNITE with the arrests, clean-up and investigation were members of the Laurel and McCreary County Sheriff's Office, the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Laurel County Division of Public Safety.

#### Second lab found

Also on Wednesday, UNITE detectives were called to assist the London Police Department and Laurel County Division of Public Safety on a methamphetamine lab at a residence on Fall Street in London.

The police department and representatives from Laurel County Probation and Parole were conducting a home visit on 32-year-old Roy Wesley Higgins when the lab was found.

Higgins, currently on probation following his arrest by UNITE in October 2007 on a charge of conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine, was arrested by the London Police Department.

For more information about Operation UNITE visit their website at [www.operationunite.org](http://www.operationunite.org).