

# NEWS RELEASE



**Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr.**  
**California Department of Justice**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **State Attorney General Cracks Down On Central Valley Gang**

ATWATER — California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. today announced a “major gang takedown,” following the arrest of dozens of A-Town Gang members in the town of Atwater. The crackdown, by State Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement agents, includes significant drug and gun seizures.

Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. said: “Too many Central Valley gang members think they can act with impunity. Law abiding citizens have too long been terrorized by thugs and small-time gangsters. Today’s major gang takedown should send a message: the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement will use every available legal tactic to rid rural counties of this growing cancer.”

The 150 member A-Town gang ran narcotics to states including Montana and Washington and terrorized Atwater--for decades--with robberies, murders, and illegal use of dangerous weapons. Today’s takedown culminated a focused effort to dismantle the A-Town crime apparatus and provide evidence for prosecution of its members to the fullest extent of the law. Investigations by Department of Justice agents garnished extensive intelligence on the gang’s national drug trafficking and criminal activity.

During Phase I of the takedown, which occurred Saturday morning, agents arrested seven top gang members and seized cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana, firearms, vehicles and approximately \$40,000. To date, agents have served approximately 40 search warrants, arrested approximately 26 suspects, and intercepted a bulk delivery of marijuana destined for Montana. Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement agents utilized intelligence tactics including gang graffiti tracking, arrest statistics analysis, and gang member and informant interviews.

Gang activity has plagued the city of Atwater and County of Merced for a number of years. Around 1990 the A-Town Dukes criminal gang was formed in Atwater and eventually became the A-Town Surenos, now commonly known as A-Town. This is the city’s largest gang and members are located all over Merced County. Gang members have been involved in numerous crimes including shootings, drug possession, drug sales, vehicle thefts, robberies and homicides.

Agencies involved in today’s operation include: California Department of Justice Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement GSET (Gang Suppression Enforcement Team), Atwater Police Department, Merced County District Attorney’s Office, Merced County Sheriff’s Department, Merced Police Department, and the California Highway Patrol.

GSET Agents are experts in conducting complex investigations needed to dismantle violent criminal street gangs. The agents identify gang members, investigate gang-related violent crime, and assist local law enforcement agencies in gathering intelligence to conduct investigations and arrest top-level gang members.

