

## Summary of Documentary on the phenomenon of Synthetic Drugs with Focus on Synthetic Marijuana

James Sassak who wrote and directed this documentary video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNU\\_t01BeGs&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNU_t01BeGs&feature=youtu.be), and the actors of *Veterans Theater* (Ernest Ramey, James Sassak, & David M. Boje) have watched with ever growing concern as Synthetic Marijuana use has become rampant in Las Cruces and across our Nation. The old model by which we judge addictive substances, and the behavior of addicts who use these substances, no longer applies. Our purpose in making this documentary is to educate Our City's Leaders and the public about this new fast evolving threat. The Consequences of Synthetic Marijuana can manifest with just one use.

In Scene one we show the deceptive nature of the way Synthetic Marijuana is marketed in smoke shops with a disclaimer that it is not for human consumption, while the vendors know full well the end use for the product.

In scene two we see the trafficking strategies that maximize profits and push the Drug at the street level.

Finally, in scene three we see the tragic and deadly Consequences of smoking Spice.

In closing, Spice can be so deadly that \$2 can buy enough of the Drug to kill anyone that uses it. Only through education and awareness and strong leadership at the State and local level do we stand a chance to ban and eradicate Spice. We recommend stronger city ordinances to penalize the sale and distribution of Spice, including revocation of business license. For example, "Anchorage [Alaska] already had a measure to combat Spice, [passed in 2014](#) to stop over-the-counter sales. This new one updates the legal mechanisms for charging and prosecuting it, charging a \$500 ticket for misbranding synthetic drugs, and attaching a misdemeanor charge to manufacture, distribution, and possession."<sup>1</sup> Las Cruces could adopt similar measures.

More information what can be done about Spice is at <http://veteranstheater.com>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.alaskapublic.org/2015/11/11/anchorage-spice-ordinance-aims-at-dealers-and-distributors/>



# 'Spice Head Falls Out' YouTube

A documentary done as Public Service to Residents of City of Las Cruces by

VETERANS THEATER

By

Dr. David Boje

Member of the Veterans Advisory Board

# Our Purpose

To educate Our City's Leaders and the public about this new fast evolving threat of Synthetic Marijuana in Las Cruces.

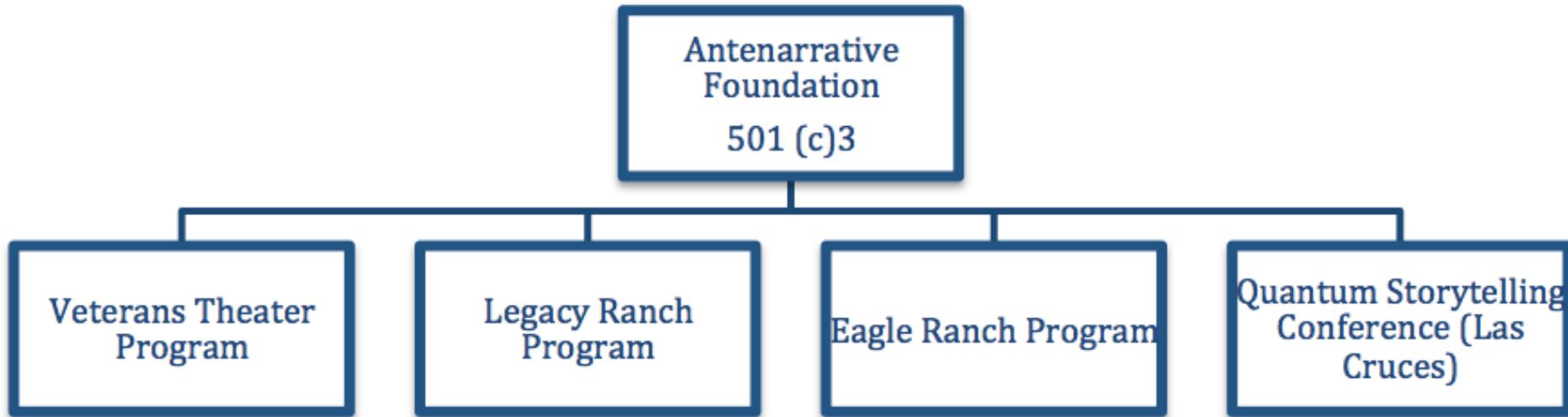


# Executive Summary:

## Our Aim Today

- We seek a vote of confidence for our vision:  
Ending Spice Trade in Las Cruces

# Who is Veterans Theater?



## NTENARRATIVE Foundation' BOARD OF TRUSTEES

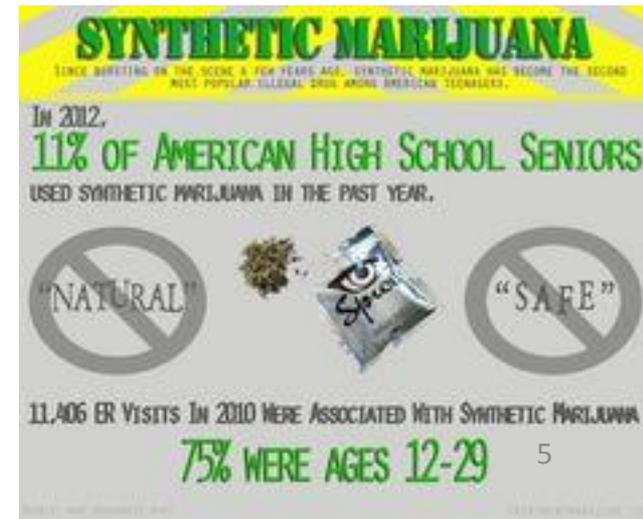
1. David M. Boje, (Veteran Army) President & NMSU Regents Professor 575-936-9578 (cell) or [David@davidboje.com](mailto:David@davidboje.com)
2. James Sassak, VP
3. Nancy Starr Breard, EDD, Treasurer 864-706-4282
4. Ernest Ramey, Secretary (Veteran Army)
5. John Hawk, Agent-at-large (Veteran Navy)
6. Wanda Whittlesey-Jerome MSW Social Work NMSU Professor

# Our Approach

VETERANS THEATER is taking Theater to the Streets

TO DO SOMETHING TO STOP THE SPICE TRADE.

1 IN 9 TEENS TRY SPICE. 2000 VETERANS GOT DISCHARGED FOR USING SPICE. SPICE IS EPIDEMIC IN AMERICA



# Spice Video for Las Cruces Residents

- James Sassak who wrote and directed this documentary video  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNU\\_t01BeGs&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNU_t01BeGs&feature=youtu.be)
- and the actors of *Veterans Theater* (Ernest Ramey, James Sassak, & David M. Boje) have watched with ever growing concern as Synthetic Marijuana use has become rampant in Las Cruces and across our Nation.

# The Video Scenes

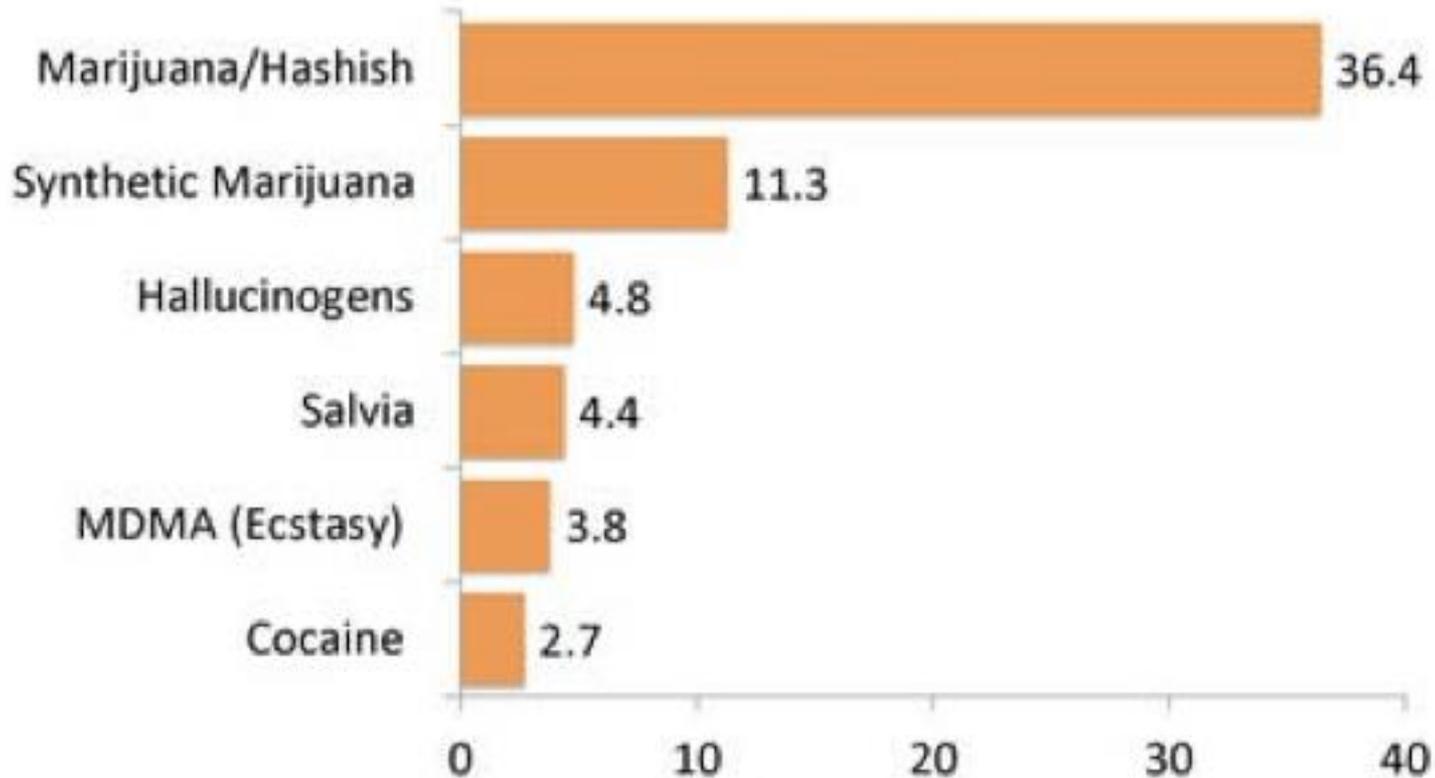
- In Scene one we show the deceptive nature of the way Synthetic Marijuana is marketed in smoke shops with a disclaimer that it is not for human consumption, while the vendors know full well the end use for the product.
- In scene two we see the trafficking strategies that maximize profits and push the Drug at the street level.
- Finally in scene three we see the tragic and deadly Consequences of smoking Spice.

# Spice is a growing problem

- Both Memorial and Mountain View Medical Centers have reported to have an increase of patients due to Spice use or overdoses.

<http://www.lcsun-news.com/story/news/crime/2015/10/03/spice-whirl-rise-last-resort-drug/73300844/>

## Past-Year Use of Illicit Drugs by High School Seniors (percent)



Source: University of Michigan, 2012 Monitoring the Future Study

# Just the Facts

- FACT: The average age of synthetic marijuana users is 13
- FACT: 1 in 9 High School students try Spice (K2, Fake Weed)
- FACT: Parolees use synthetic marijuana to fool the tests for drug use
- FACT: In 2015: "It seemed as if an upswing in such incidents here, which began in June, had suddenly and dramatically spiked" - [Times Leader](#)
- FACT: PCP often is applied to a leafy material such as mint, parsley, oregano, or marijuana, so users can smoke it, according to NIDA's website, [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov).
- FACT: Synthetic Weed Is Ravaging New Mexico's Homeless Population. "You don't have to feel emotions or pain and all those kinds of things. The majority of these shelters don't have programs for these guys, they don't have activities, so this is what they do all day." --[vice.com](http://www.vice.com)
- FACT: In 48 hour period, in Sept 2015, in Las Cruces, there were 17 overdoses, and two died, but the hospitals lack the testing equipment to tell if its Fake Pot.

# Statistics on Spice

- “Spice” or “K2”—has become the second most popular illegal drug among American teenagers, after MJ.
- Sometimes touted as a “natural,” “safe,” and (until recently) legal alternative to pot, this very un-natural class of designer chemicals has shown itself to be a dangerous threat.
- Thousands of teens and young adults, mostly young males, are ending up in emergency rooms with severe symptoms that may include vomiting, racing heartbeat, elevated blood pressure, seizures, or hallucinations.”
- -[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

# The Problem

- [Spice: Uncontrolled substance killing residents, dividing communities](#)
- LAS CRUCES – TO MANY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE — LIKE ROLLING A BOULDER UP A MOUNTAIN. Damien Willis, Las Cruces Sun-News Sunday Feb 1st 2016
- [See Sun-News Editorial Feb 4 on what can be done to create a local ordinance](#)
- [Spice whirl: The rise of a last-resort drug ..](#)  
By Damien Willis, Las Cruces Sun-News 9:20 p.m. MDT October 3, 2015
- [New Las Cruces theater group gives voice to veterans, homeless](#)
- By Mike Cook Las Cruces Bulletin, 5 February, 2016

# The Magnitude of the Problem

- Spice can be so deadly that \$2 can buy enough of the Drug to kill anyone that uses it

A public health warning poster with a black background. In the top left, there is a small pile of green synthetic marijuana (spice) and a white cigarette. The main text is in large, bold, yellow letters: "FAKE POT" and "REAL DANGER". Below this, in white text, it says: "SMOKING SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA, LIKE SPICE AND K2, HAS LED TO MORE THAN 250 HOSPITAL VISITS IN COLORADO IN TWO MONTHS. THERE IS A BAD BATCH ON THE STREETS. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN IT." Further down, it states: "SMOKING IT CAUSES PARANOIA, SEIZURES, AND COMA." At the bottom, it provides contact information: "For more information, call the CO HELP LINE 1-877-462-2911 or 303-389-1687 or visit www.cohelp.us." In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "CO HELP" with the phone number "1-877-462-2911". At the very bottom, there is a small line of text: "The Colorado Health Emergency Line for Public Information (COHELP) is a public support service sponsored by the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment."

**FAKE POT  
REAL DANGER**

SMOKING SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA, LIKE SPICE AND K2, HAS LED TO MORE THAN **250 HOSPITAL VISITS** IN COLORADO IN TWO MONTHS. THERE IS A BAD BATCH ON THE STREETS. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN IT.

SMOKING IT CAUSES PARANOIA, SEIZURES, AND COMA.

For more information, call the CO HELP LINE 1-877-462-2911 or 303-389-1687 or visit [www.cohelp.us](http://www.cohelp.us).

**CO HELP**  
1-877-462-2911

The Colorado Health Emergency Line for Public Information (COHELP) is a public support service sponsored by the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment.

# EMT Report

- American Medical Response of Doña Ana County, stated that it had responded to 219 overdoses, though not specifically Spice overdoses, between Jan. 8 and Aug. 15 of 2015 — an average of one overdose per day. Between Aug. 16 and September 30, paramedics responded to 58 overdoses, an average of 1.26 per day.

## Need for Codes for Spice Sale and Distribution



- [Final spice buy film sept 11 2015](#) YouTube
- by [Veterans Theater](#)
- We did a buy of SPICE (k2) 2 days after the police raided the place, and ...

# Solutions

- Only through education and awareness and strong leadership at the State and local level do we stand a chance to ban and eradicate Spice problem



# Recommendations

- We recommend strong city ordinances to penalize the sale and distribution of Spice, including revocation of business license
- 1. Pull Business License of those who produce, distribute, and sell
- 2. City Council pass an ordinance making it \$500 fine and a misdemeanor charge to manufacture, distribution, and possession

# Example of Enforcement Option

“Anchorage [Alaska] already had a measure to combat Spice, [passed in 2014](#) to stop over-the-counter sales. This new one updates the legal mechanisms for charging and prosecuting it, charging a \$500 ticket for misbranding synthetic drugs, and attaching a misdemeanor charge to manufacture, distribution, and possession.” Las Cruces could adopt similar measures.

<http://www.alaskapublic.org/2015/11/11/anchorage-spice-ordinance-aims-at-dealers-and-distributors/>

# New York Example

**"NYC Selling or producing K2 was previously only considered a health code violation in New York state, punishable with a \$250 fine. Under the new laws, offenders can be sentenced to a year in jail and fined up to \$50,000. Shops could also be shut down" -- [More.](#)**

# MORE INFO

- Some 450 synthetic (fake) cannabinoid compounds are sold by business, many here in the USA. Smoking spice leads to very aggressive, angry behavior, to vomiting stomach pain, severe anxiety, and too often death. Smoking spice is like playing Russian roulette.
- **[READ MORE ON SPICE DANGERS TO LAS CRUCES at http://veteranstheater.com](http://veteranstheater.com)**

# What Parents Can do



<https://spiceisnotnice.org/spice-edukit/> for more information

# References

- [Veterans Theater 'Spicehead Falls Out' public service YouTube](#)
- [Veterans Theater 'Legacy Ranch' an Eco-Village for Veterans YouTube](#)
- [Veterans Theater 'Spice Buy' in Las Cruces YouTube](#)
- Additional Resources:
- [http://spiceaddictionsupport.org/side-effects-of-spice-use/](#)
- [http://www.narconon.org/blog/synthetic-drug-abuse/what-makes-synthetic-marijuana-dangerous/](#)
- [http://spiceaddictionsupport.org/what-is-spice/](#)
- [http://spiceaddictionsupport.org/list-of-known-synthetic-cannabinoids/](#)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synthetic\\_cannabis](#)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis](#)
- [http://www.businessinsider.com/a-deadly-drug-called-k2-has-taken-over-an-entire-block-in-new-york-city-2015-9](#)
- [http://www.drugpolicy.org/blog/how-did-marijuana-become-illegal-first-place](#)

# Our thanks to the Videographer

- Jessie Sanchez, Student at New Mexico State University, team member doing Spice research in Mgt 375v Sustainability Development (Professor Boje, instructor).

Thank you from James Sassak, Ernest Ramey, and David M. Boje, Ph.D.

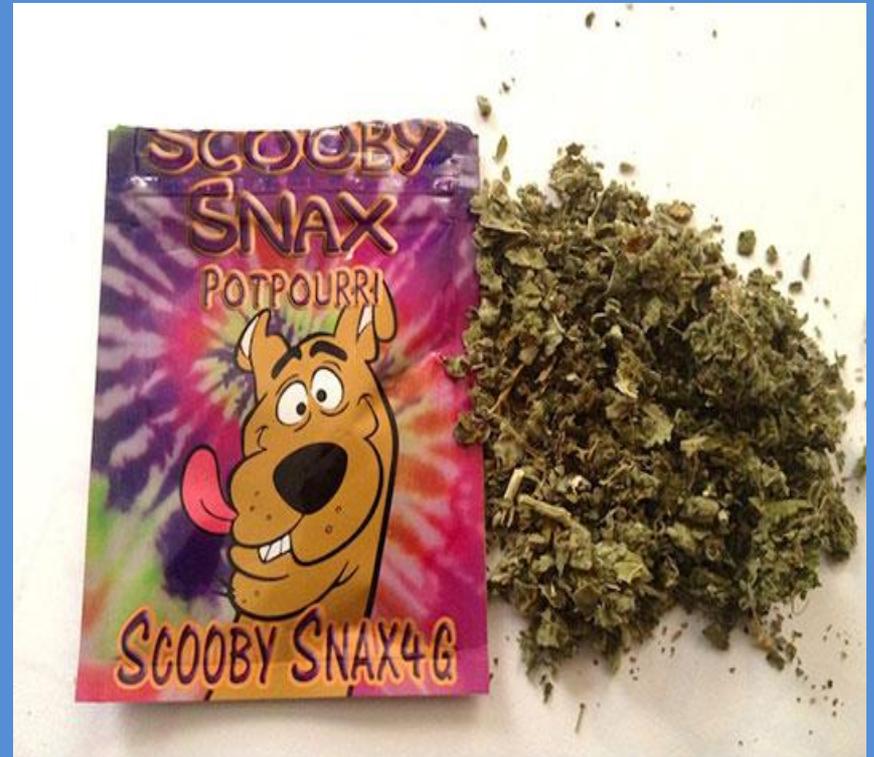


# LAS CRUCES POLICE DEPARTMENT



# Spice (K2)

- “Spice” or “K2” is a mixture of herbs or spices sprayed with synthetic chemicals similar to THC, the natural occurring chemical in Marijuana, but more powerful.



# What is “Spice”?

- “Spice” is NOT Marijuana, it is a dangerous Hallucinogenic Drug!
- Intentionally mislabeled as “herbal incense” and or “potpourri”.
- Marked “Not for Human Consumption” as an attempt to thwart law enforcement.



# How is “Spice” used?

- Users usually smoke the dried plant material sprayed with synthetic cannabinoids.
- Sometimes they mix the sprayed plant material with marijuana, or they brew it as tea.
- Other users buy synthetic cannabinoid products as liquids to vaporize them in e-cigarettes.

# Not the same as Bath Salts

- “Spice” is not the same as “Bath Salts” which are Synthetic cathinones.
- Synthetic cathinones, are synthetic drugs chemically related to cathinone, a stimulant found in the khat plant.
- Khat is a shrub grown in East Africa and southern Arabia, and people sometimes chew its leaves for their mild stimulant effects.
- Synthetic variants of cathinone can be much stronger than the natural product and, in some cases, very dangerous.

# “Spice” Dangers

- Unregulated, Untested, No Medicinal Use.
- No long-term studies, the true effects are not yet known.
- Spice/K2 is physically addicting.
- First time use has resulted in overdose.

# “Spice” Indicators

LCPD Drug Recognition Expert:

- Synthetic cannabinoid users report some effects similar to those produced by marijuana:
- elevated mood
- relaxation
- altered perception—awareness of surrounding objects and conditions
- symptoms of psychosis—delusional or disordered thinking detached from reality

# “Spice” Indicators

Psychotic effects include:

- confusion
- paranoia—extreme and unreasonable distrust of others
- hallucinations—sensations and images that seem real though they are not

# Issues Facing Law Enforcement

- Spice is sold in convenience stores and local “smoke shops”.
- No age requirement to purchase “Spice”.
- Easily available for order online from China.
- Drug formulas constantly are altered to stay a step ahead of law enforcement.
- “Spice” has to be sent to the state lab to determine if the product is in fact illegal.

# Issues Facing Law Enforcement

- Possession of “Spice” is a petty misdemeanor.
- Petty misdemeanor crimes have a 1 year statute of limitations. Misdemeanor crimes have a 2 year statute of limitations.
- The crime lab has a 6-month back-log on current felony cases.
- There are NO current test kits that are available to law enforcement due to ever changing chemical makeup of “Spice”.

# New Mexico State Statute

- 30-31-23. Controlled substance; possession prohibited
- A person who possesses one ounce or less of marijuana or synthetic cannabinoids is, for the first offense, guilty of a petty misdemeanor.
- More than one ounce and less than eight ounces of marijuana or synthetic cannabinoids is guilty of a misdemeanor.

# New Mexico State Statute

- A person who possesses eight ounces or more of marijuana or synthetic cannabinoids is guilty of a fourth degree felony.
- 30-31-22. Controlled or counterfeit substances; distribution prohibited
  - It is unlawful for a person to intentionally distribute or possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance, marijuana or synthetic cannabinoids. A first offense, guilty of a fourth degree felony.

# LCPD Statistics

- “Spice” related incidents are classified as Inhaling Harmful Vapors.
- From January-2014 to December-2015 there were 44 incidents related to Inhaling Harmful Vapors.
- Of those 44 incidents, 57% involved “Spice”.

Questions?