

MCSO nab Gallup man on drug charges after traffic stop: Meth, pipes seized in traffic stop

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By Bernie Dotson

Sun Correspondent

A routine traffic stop on May 3 yielded the arrest of one Gallup man on drug charges and with another given a written citation for drug evidence, officials said at a Friday afternoon news conference.

Wade Rodriguez, 23, and Aaron Gonzales, 26, were pulled over by McKinley County Sheriff's Office Deputy Johnson Lee near Historic Highway 66 and not far from Aztec Avenue on the east side of town. Rodriguez was subsequently charged with trafficking a controlled substance and also charged with the possession, delivery or manufacturing of drug paraphernalia, according to Lee's report on the matter.

Gonzales was not charged in the incident, but was momentarily detained and issued a non-traffic citation for possessing a "glass pipe (commonly) used for methamphetamine," Johnson wrote. Gonzales was not jailed and was let go by the deputies.

Speaking at Friday's news conference, Lt. Pat Salazar of the McKinley County Sheriff's Office said Lee and fellow McKinley sheriff's deputy A.J. Noriega have been very aggressive in stopping or pulling people over who are known countywide for engaging in illegal narcotics activity. The routine traffic stops usually lead to deputies uncovering drugs or something related to drug activity, Salazar noted. Lee and Noriega have been particularly aggressive in pinpointing criminal activity, he said.

"This has been some very good police work on behalf of these two deputies especially," Salazar said of Lee and Noriega. "They are doing an outstanding job of getting criminals and drugs off of McKinley County's streets."

Lee's report noted that Rodriguez had a meth pipe, a scale and a red baggie that contained

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“crystal-like substances” in his jacket pocket. The substances were ultimately identified as methamphetamine, Lee noted in the report.

