



In This Issue

- Letter from the Assistant Commissioner 1
- Multi-agency Partnership Launches \$1.55M Challenge for New Solutions to Detect Opioids in International Mail 1
- Technology Thwarts Human Smuggler at Immigration Checkpoint 2
- Homeland Security Officials Launch New Detroit Task Force to Protect National Security 2
- CBP ROAM App Pilot Project Expands to Lake Metigoshe, North Dakota 2
- Imposter Identified by CBP Officers at Port of San Luis 2

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Letter from the Assistant Commissioner: Innovation at CBP

- 1 I'm Kim Lowry, acting assistant commissioner for CBP's Office of Congressional Affairs. Technology is an invaluable force-multiplier for CBP, from the way we screen people and cargo coming into our country to the way we secure our borders. Every day, our efforts to modernize infrastructure, ports of entry, and mobile technologies are making a difference in our security operations. Whether it's stopping drugs, discovering imposters, preventing illegal immigration, or facilitating lawful travel, technology helps CBP carry out our many missions faster and more effectively.
- 2 Twenty-first-century threats and 21st-century economies require 21st-century tools. That's why we appreciate Congress' support for the innovations that help us keep our country safe and secure.

Multi-agency Partnership Launches \$1.55M Challenge for New Solutions to Detect Opioids in International Mail



On Feb. 27, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), in collaboration with CBP, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service launched the [Opioid Detection Challenge](#). The challenge calls upon innovators to submit novel plans for rapid, nonintrusive detection tools that will help find illicit opioids being tracked into the United States through international mail.

"CBP is excited to partner with DHS S&T to identify the next generation of interdiction tools," said CBP Commissioner Kevin McAleenan. "The technologies that emerge

from this innovation challenge will be important elements of our multi-layered approach to combat the flow of opioids and other dangerous illicit drugs."

The abuse of opioids such as fentanyl has created an unprecedented public health crisis across the United States. In 2017, approximately 50,000 Americans died from opioid overdoses. Large-scale drug trafficking of fentanyl can occur via small packages sent in the mail as well as other avenues like ports of entry, making detection a significant challenge.

"This competition is part of the comprehensive government effort to address the opioid crisis that is devastating too many American communities," said DHS Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary for Science and Technology William N. Bryan. "New tools and technologies offer a critical opportunity to more quickly and accurately detect opioids before they enter the United States."

The Opioid Detection Challenge calls on innovators in a wide range of fields, from forensic science to industrial quality assurance to artificial intelligence, to help disrupt the flow of opioids into the United States. Submissions should be well-developed plans for automated, user-friendly tools and technologies that have the potential to quickly and accurately detect opioids in parcels, without disrupting the flow of mail. The challenge is open to both international and domestic participants.

Those interested in participating in the challenge should submit their plans by 4:49 p.m. ET, April 24, 2019. The judges will evaluate the submissions and select up to eight finalists to advance to Stage 2 of the competition. Each finalist is expected to be awarded an equal share of the \$800,000 Stage 1 prize pool.

In Stage 2, finalists will participate in a 14-week prototyping accelerator, during which they will develop their plans into testable prototypes and compete for an additional \$750,000 in cash prizes. Stage 2 will culminate in a live test event hosted by DHS, where finalists will convene for on-site testing of their prototypes. One grand prize winner is expected to be awarded \$500,000, and one runner-up is expected to be awarded \$250,000.

For more information, please visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

Technology Thwarts Human Smuggler at Immigration Checkpoint

On March 8, Nogales Station Border Patrol agents working at the Interstate 19 immigration checkpoint utilized X-ray technology to disrupt the smuggling of three men.

At approximately 10:45 a.m., agents working the primary immigration inspection lane referred the driver of a flatbed tow truck hauling a Chevy Silverado for secondary inspection. Using X-ray technology, agents detected anomalies in the cab of the Silverado atop the flatbed. A subsequent search of the vehicle revealed three individuals stacked atop one another in an attempt to conceal themselves.

The three men, identified as Mexican nationals illegally present in the United States, were arrested and will be processed for immigration violations. The smuggler will be prosecuted for human smuggling. For more information, please visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



Homeland Security Officials Launch New Detroit Task Force to Protect National Security



In an effort to mitigate vulnerabilities within the commerce stream that threaten the nation's consumers and to protect national security, Homeland Security officials recently launched its Global Trade Task Force (GTF), a multi-agency effort that leverages robust import and export controls and investigative authorities to combat illicit commercial activities. Authorities announced results from a recent task force effort on March 11 at Detroit's Fort Street Cargo Facility.

The new task force combines the investigative, interdiction, regulatory, and licensing capabilities from a variety of agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, and the Food and Drug Administration's Office of Criminal Investigations.

The GTF's primary mission is to counter the following types of illicit commercial activities:

- Health and Safety: Trafficking of counterfeit, substandard, or tainted merchandise, with an emphasis on goods that pose a threat to public health or safety including pharmaceuticals and cosmeceuticals, automotive, aerospace, rail, and heavy industry products; and environmental crimes.
- Trade Crime: Financially-motivated fraud schemes that deprive revenue from the United States government or which harm businesses, rights holders, or undermine financial institutions.
- Counter-Proliferation: Illegal export of United States military products, sensitive dual-use technology, weapons of mass destruction, or chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials.

To kick off the GTF, HSI Detroit partnered with CBP and other agencies in a weeklong enforcement effort at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport and Port Huron Blue Water Bridge Ports of Entry. The action targeted merchandise and shipments entering and exiting the United States from foreign countries at the FedEx, DHL, rail, and the centralized examination station. During the weeklong surge, HSI and CBP seized more than \$1,000,000 in counterfeit goods and counterfeit prescription drugs, which included, counterfeit Xanax pills and Botox, counterfeit transceiver network modules, counterfeit e-cigarettes, and counterfeit Rolexes and iPhone, among other items. For more information, please visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

CBP ROAM App Pilot Project Expands to Lake Metigoshe, North Dakota

CBP's Office of Field Operations has added Lake Metigoshe to the list of pilot locations now using the new CBP ROAM application for small boat reporting. This pilot addresses a pressing issue for border locations that depend heavily on tourism and recreation in recreational boating locations. Recreational boaters from both Manitoba and North Dakota travel to this border area with their families to enjoy fishing and other outdoor activities. Oftentimes these groups travel into our out of the province of Manitoba, Canada, which prompts border security checks by CBP upon return.

However, to help change all of that, CBP soft-launched the ROAM pilot program. The CBP ROAM app gives small boaters on border waters the flexibility of reporting their arrival into the U.S. from any location via a device that is capable of 4G/LTE or Wi-Fi. The CBP ROAM app is available in the Apple and Android stores under CBP ROAM. The app enables boaters to efficiently make entry into the United States via a video conference with CBP officers. Small boaters can construct a profile within the app and submit their information for a CBP video conference when crossing the U.S. border via water. Travelers can easily save their information with the app or recreate it for future crossings. For more information, please visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



Imposter Identified by CBP Officers at Port of San Luis

On Feb. 18, CBP Office of Field Operations officers arrested an El Salvadorian national who was identified as an imposter attempting to cross through the Port of San Luis. The 18-year-old male presented a valid U.S. passport travel card to the CBP officer which identified him as a 22-year-old Colorado man. Using the Simplified Arrival system, officers identified the man as a mismatch, which led him to being referred for secondary questioning. He later admitted to his true identity as well as his citizenship, telling officers he was intended to travel to New Jersey. The traveler was deemed inadmissible to the United States and referred for criminal prosecution.

Facial recognition helps CBP swiftly identify imposters while providing a level of convenience for the traveler. The new Simplified Arrival process enables increased security, faster throughput, and better efficiency. For more information, please visit CBP.gov or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) serves as the single point of contact within CBP for communications between CBP and Congress.

OCA is committed to addressing any question or concern you may have related to CBP's complex mission. Please contact us:

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Please visit CBP's [Congressional Resources](#) webpage for frequently asked questions, news and events, and other CBP resources.