

**WEATHER:** Chance of more rain, **A2**

**PLAYOFFS:** Tigers, Cubs build leads, **B1**

**CROP WALK:** Run to be on Sunday, **C1**

### Local

Natural gas leak near Valley halts traffic, **A3**

Advice/C7 Horoscopes/C7  
Almanac/A2 Lifestyle/C1 Opinion/A8  
Classified Ads/C2-4 Local/A3-4 Sports/B1-4  
Comics/C7 Markets/A8 State/A5  
Games/C8 Obituaries/A2 TV Listings/C7  
US-World/C8

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## Two arrested in Arlington drug raid

BY THERESA WULF

Staff Writer  
**ARLINGTON** — A man and a woman living in rural Arlington were arrested Wednesday night in connection with a marijuana-growing operation on land near their rented trailer.

David Mears, 40, and Lillian Carole McCleaver, 38, were arrested on suspicion of the manufacture of marijuana and felony possession of marijuana, according to Lt. Manuel Gallardo, officer in charge of investigations for the Nebraska State Patrol.

Mears' address is listed as rural Arlington, but he is from Eureka Springs, Ark., Gallardo said. Ms. McCleaver is from Eureka Springs.

Gallardo said the two probably would be charged today. They are being held in the Washington County Jail.

Fourteen men from the Fremont and Arlington police departments and the state patrol's SWAT, traffic and drug divisions were involved in the raid, which began about 4 p.m. Wednesday.

Detective Sgt. Steve Tellatin of the Fremont Police Department said the raid was the result of an investigation which began in February when a local motel con-

tacted the Dodge County Sheriff's Department about some suspicious guests.

The sheriff's office contacted investigators, and local police began surveilling the suspects and identifying them.

Surveillance continued through the winter and early spring, and with help from the Arkansas State Patrol, Tellatin said they were able to confirm that the suspects were from Arkansas and were operating a marijuana plant and harvest operation.

They were followed to the Arlington farm, but at that point law officers weren't sure if they were operating from there because the vegetation was so small.

A "loose surveillance" was maintained throughout the summer, Tellatin said, and after Arlington police stopped one of the suspects this week, he notified the Nebraska State Patrol that the man still was in the area.

State Patrol investigators flew over the area and located the field Wednesday, and after a search warrant for the property was obtained, the raid was organized.

Tellatin said that after the field was secured, law enforcement of-



Staff Photo/Theresa Wulf

Local and state law officials obtained about 160 pounds of marijuana and several firearms after searching this rural Arlington double-wide trailer early this morning. The raid began

officials confronted suspects at a gold, double-wide trailer on the property. Mears and Ms. McCleaver were detained, but police believe at least two other individuals escaped.

Wednesday afternoon after an air search by state patrol investigators located marijuana growing in a corn field near the trailer.

Gallardo said the state patrol has no idea who the people who fled are. They probably are not dangerous, he said.

According to Rich Wagner, supervising officer of the in-

vestigation, there were "easily 300 (marijuana) plants" planted amid corn in a field 1/4 miles northwest of Arlington next to the Elkhorn River. Wagner could not estimate how

many pounds of marijuana were growing in the field.

"Some plants were 7 feet tall — as big as a Christmas tree," he said, while others were only 3 feet tall.

He also could not estimate its street value, but said the drug is "hybrid marijuana" and was cultivated.

"It's not Nebraska ditchweed," Wagner said.

After Mears and Ms. McCleaver were detained, the narcotics investigators secured the field and maintained surveillance.

A search warrant for the trailer was obtained at 2 this morning, Tellatin said. A search of the house netted about 160 pounds of marijuana, "a rifle, a couple of shotguns and some pistols," Tellatin said.

Officials could not confirm how large the fields were, who owned the land, who rented it to Mears, or for how much or how long it was rented. However, Gallardo said officials don't think the owners were involved with the operation.

Gallardo also said the investigation is continuing, and that additional arrests may be made.

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