

# The CourierNews

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## Police used helicopter in Elgin house raid *Cops were looking for guns, drugs; search warrant executed*

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**ELGIN** - Four people were taken into custody Thursday night after police raided a residence for guns and drugs on the city's southeast side.

Taken into custody were:

- Felicia A Villalpnado, 31, of Aurora, who was being held on a DuPage County arrest warrant with bail set at \$12,000.
- Jovan Sievers, 30, also of Aurora, charged with unlawful contact with a street gang member, a Class A misdemeanor.
- Bianca Vinegas, 19, of Elgin, charged with underage consumption of alcohol, a Class A misdemeanor.
- Brandon Richardson, 19, also of Elgin, being held on a Kane County arrest warrant with bail set at \$15,000.

Elgin Deputy Police Chief Jeff Swoboda said that the region's Law Enforcement Aviation Commission sent a helicopter to the scene. LEAC sends a helicopter at the request of local police departments to assist them when a case is believed to be or could develop into a major one, Swoboda said.

Sgt. Dan O'Shea of the department's Gang and Crimes Unit said the helicopters are used for air cover if officers believe a chase will ensue, or to use the 30 million candle-watt capability to illuminate the area. The lights are able to light up a city block.

Elgin police have taken advantage of the helicopter service a half dozen times in the past year. Those have included searches for burglars and a lost child and during last fall's floods.

LEAC has helicopters based in Kenosha, Wis., and Winthrop Harbor. Rockford recently obtained a UH-1 Huey from the Department of Defense, which will be converted to a search and rescue and SWAT vehicle.

*"We try to minimize the risk of anyone being hurt" during police procedures, O'Shea said regarding the benefits of having a helicopter to assist officers. "Officer safety and resident safety is paramount to us, and having an aerial platform provides a much better view of the incident and surrounding area. We have had some issues in that area with gangs previously so a decision was made to utilize the helicopter."*

No guns were located, but small amounts of marijuana and ammunition were found at the scene of Thursday night's raid, Swoboda said.

The residence is a known hang out for gang members, according to police. It was inspected by the Code Enforcement Administration after the raid, determined to be uninhabitable and subsequently was boarded up. #