

Explosion at S. Tahoe apartment lands man in jail on drug charges

By Kathryn Reed

A South Lake Tahoe man blew out the windows of his apartment when he was allegedly trying to extract THC from marijuana using butane.

Arrested the night of March 7 was Samuel Frangella, 22, on charges of drug manufacturing, possession of drug paraphernalia, arson and felony child endangerment. The latter charge is because the couple next door has small children and the law says in a manufacturing case it's not just the room, but the whole building that is considered the drug lab.

Jeff Catchings, commander of South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team, said Frangella is lucky not to have been burned. With the window of his unit at 1223 Bonanza Ave. being blown out, casting shards of glass at least 100 feet, it kept the flame from staying inside. The interior of the residence was not damaged much either, Catchings said.

Catchings said this is the equivalent of having a meth lab in the middle of town.

"Based on the amount of butane in room, he had enough in there to blow himself up," Catchings said.

The officer also said the suspect photographed himself extracting the THC.

The end result of such extractions is called honey oil because that's what it looks like. It can be used in food or smoked.

Catchings also said his job and SLEDNET as a whole will remain

intact through the end of this fiscal year with the use of drug forfeiture money. There was the threat the drug enforcement unit would have to disband starting this calendar year. It remains to be seen if SLEDNET will operate past June 30.