



NEWS RELEASE

Date: June 4, 2008
Time: 10:15 A.M.

Case Number: 2007-27384 Toy's Scrap & Salvage
2007-27385 Cooley's Statewide Scrap and Salvage
2007-27386 Max Phillips and Son
2007-27387 U-Can Recycling Inc.
2007-27388 Spickler Recycling

SEARCH WARRANTS

On Wednesday, June 4th 2008 at approximately 1000 hrs the Eau Claire Police Department coordinated the execution of five (5) search warrants at the above listed Eau Claire area scrap and salvage yards. The search warrants were issued by the Eau Claire County Circuit Court for the recovery of:

- Copper wire on wood spools containing Xcel Energy identifying stamps or marks
- Empty aluminum/steel barrels commonly utilized to store beer (kegs)
- Any recyclable materials containing Xcel Energy identifying stamps or marks
- Railroad track iron/steel
- Any recyclable materials containing Union Pacific Railroad or Canadian National Railway identifying stamps or markings
- Six-guage copper wire
- Nine-guage uncoated copper wire
- Any and all transaction records, customer lists or business records regarding transactions involving the purchase of copper, aluminum or stainless steel beer barrels, railroad track/steel during the time period of January 1, 2006 to present date
- "Red Line" copper wire, which is black-coated copper wire with red stripes

The information and coordination leading to the issuance of the search warrants resulted from seven (7) months of undercover work involving over fifty (50) transactions by detectives.

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Detective Division: 839-4978
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Eau Claire Police Chief Jerry Matysik advises:

“As the price of metal has increased, so has the theft of metal. People have no use for scrap metal and have no reason to steal it, unless they can turn that metal into cash. By purchasing metal that is obviously stolen, scrap metal dealers are facilitating additional thefts in our community.

Sadly, it is convenient for these businesses to look the other way in an effort to increase their profits, rather than to do the right thing and refuse to accept stolen items.”

Eau Claire Police Department Deputy Chief Eric Larsen advises:

"Metal theft is a problem that impacts the safety and quality of life for every citizen in the state. Metal stolen just in Eau Claire has included stolen railroad switch signal cable that left train engineers blind to the safe status of rail lines in the county, stolen ground cable from power substations, and stolen manhole covers that left manholes on our public streets open for vehicles, bicycles or pedestrians to fall into.

Extra locks and more police patrols are not the answer. Tight budgets and increasing demands on law enforcement resources require that all of us, public and private organizations alike, participate in confronting threats to our safety and quality of life.

On March 11 of this year, Governor Doyle signed Act 64 into law. The new law requires that scrap metal dealers collect identification from persons who bring in metal for sale. The scrap metal dealer must document the transaction and make that information available to the police. The new requirements have the potential to assist law enforcement in solving crime and reducing incidents of metal theft. But it will only be effective if the scrap metal dealers are careful to ask questions and properly document each transaction."

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Fraud Investigator Jim Anderson states:

“Due to the high cost of scrap metal, investigating both licensed and unlicensed salvage dealers has been a point of emphasis for the Department of Transportation this year. We are currently involved in several operations such as this and will be conducting additional audits of many salvage dealers across the state in the coming months.”

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Since January 1, 2006, the **Canadian National Railway** has experienced in excess of twelve (12) incidents of theft involving railroad material totaling over **\$56,000** in the Wisconsin counties of Chippewa, Rusk, Polk, Washburn, Douglas, and in the Minnesota county of St. Louis.

From January 1, 2006 – May 20, 2008, the **Union Pacific Railroad** has been the victim of numerous thefts involving railroad material, signal wire, and copper wire totaling over **\$113,150** in Wisconsin alone.

During 2006, 2007, and 2008, **Xcel Energy** advised their loss of copper wire and materials by theft is in excess of **\$655,434**.

In 2006, **The Eau Claire Police Department** saw approximately **\$59,000** worth of metal theft cases.

The above search warrants were executed through combined efforts from the following agencies:

Eau Claire Police Department
Chippewa Falls Police Department
West Central Drug Task Force
Altoona Police Department
Wisconsin State Patrol
Eau Claire Communications Center
Xcel Energy
Union Pacific Railroad
Canadian National Railway

Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department
Trempealeau County Sheriff's Department
St. Croix County Sheriff's Department
Chippewa County Sheriff's Department
Pierce County Sheriff's Department
Jackson County Sheriff's Department
Dunn County Sheriff's Department
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

***Any criminal charges resulting from the above search warrants will be filed by the Eau Claire County District Attorney's Office at a later date.**

Media Inquiries can be directed to:

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