



MEDIA RELEASE

Homeland Security

Ohio Homeland Security • Richard L. Zwyer II, Executive Director
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New scrap law enables law enforcement access to database used to bust multi-jurisdiction theft ring

COLUMBUS – Scrap metal theft is a growing epidemic that affects each of us - from rising insurance costs to higher consumer prices, scrap metal theft takes money out of everyone's pocket.

In May, Detective Tony Crookston of the Jackson Township Police Department, and members of the Stark and Carroll County Scrap Co-Op were notified of a theft at a local manufacturer. After a complete company inventory, it was determined that 14 aluminum molds, with a value of over \$230,000, were missing from the plant.

During the course of the investigation, it was determined that a large number of persons had access to the aluminum molds. To narrow the search of suspects, Detective Crookston turned to the state's Dealer Daily Transaction Database (DDTD), accessed through Ohio Homeland Security's Communication and Information Management System (CIMS).

The DDTD was developed as a tool to assist law enforcement officials solve scrap metal theft cases by being able to review transactions of registered metal dealers across the state.

By using the DDTD, investigators were able to quickly narrow the suspect list, collect key evidence from local scrap yards and issue an arrest warrant. After arresting the suspect, a full confession was obtained and led to the arrest of a second suspect.

Both suspects were also found to have committed similar scrap thefts in the City of Canton. Co-Op coordinator Lieutenant Roger Criehtfield and Detective Mike Talkington of the Canton Police Department initiated investigations which led to additional charges. The second suspect and an unrelated female were additionally charged with theft as a result of this ongoing investigation. All of the suspects have been indicted on multiple felony charges through the Stark County Grand Jury.

"This case that illustrates the costs that we all bear due to scrap metal thieves," said Ohio Homeland Security Executive Director Richard Zwyer. "It is encouraging to see that the scrap metal law and the use of the database is assisting law enforcement to battle this crime."

Each of the stolen aluminum molds, some dating back to the 1970s, makes a specific part for each of the manufacturer's customers. There are no known prints to rebuild them, meaning that the molds must now be rebuilt by reverse engineering the specific part. Although the value of these molds is over \$230,000, the cost to this manufacturer in loss of business and manufacturing of new molds is incalculable.

"The information available through CIMS has been an invaluable tool for our investigators," said Lt. Crihfield. "Our Co-Op has benefitted tremendously by forging a working relationship with the staff of Ohio Homeland Security's Fusion Center."

In 2015, the Canton Police Department, Jackson Township Police Department, Alliance Police Department, Stark County Sheriff's Office and Carroll County Sheriff's Office formed the Stark and Carroll County Scrap Co-Op to specifically fight against scrap metal theft. The Co-Op intends to expand its membership to all willing agencies within the two counties and aims to become a model for similarly situated agencies.

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