

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Vehicle Theft Ring

Sheriff Jimmy Harris reports the arrest of several individuals in what is best described as a multi-jurisdictional vehicle theft ring. The DeKalb County Sheriff's Office, along with Fort Payne Police Department, Rainsville Police Department, Marshall County Sheriff's Office, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, and the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, have been working to apprehend the persons responsible for the thefts of 2 camping trailers, a 4-wheeler and trailer, 3 high performance cars, and 11 trucks. These thefts date back to July of 2008 and continue until January of 2009. Suspects were developed early in this case, but it became apparent that there was a large scale operation covering most of North Alabama. The majority of the vehicles were ultimately recovered but two were destroyed by fire in an effort to prevent apprehension. Two other vehicles were stripped for parts and later recovered. The investigation has resulted in the arrest of:

Weston Lee Tidwell (24, of Rainsville) – 14 counts Theft of Property 1st Degree

Dana Michelle Tidwell (36, of Rainsville) – 10 counts Theft of Property 1st Degree

Cesar Augusto Noriega – 2 counts Receiving Stolen Property 1st Degree

Terry Michael Kelly – 1 count Receiving Stolen Property 1st Degree, Unlawful Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, Unlawful Possession of Controlled Substance, Unlawful Possession of Marijuana 2nd Degree

Sheena Star Hooker – Unlawful Possession of Controlled Substance and Unlawful Possession of Marijuana

During the course of this investigation, officers determined that vehicles stolen in Northeast Alabama were being taken to West Alabama by way of Huntsville. Trooper Tony Brewer made a traffic stop in Marion County, Alabama, that resulted in the arrests of Terry Michael Kelly and Sheena Star Hooker. Kelly and Hooker were in a stolen truck from the Rainsville area. During Trooper Brewer's stop, drugs were found, resulting in additional charges for those individuals.

Information gained from these suspects indicates the primary motivation in these thefts was for furtherance of drug activity. The vehicles taken were often traded for methamphetamine and cash. Some of the vehicles were stripped and parts traded for drugs. These arrests across North Alabama have yielded information which should result in additional individuals being arrested.

This investigation is ongoing and further information will be made available as it develops.



