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Press Release

Copper Theft Cases Green Springs, Fremont, Clyde, Bellevue, Perkins Township, and Castalia

Re: State of Ohio vs. Michael Ward; Pelmer Owens; Allen Dirnberg, Amy Keegan; Mark Rollins; Chris Grover; and Franklin Combs

On April 3, 2012 Defendant Michael Ward entered pleas of guilty to ten (10) counts of Breaking & Entering and was sentenced to eight (8) years imprisonment by Judge Steve Shuff. Ward had been the final defendant in numerous cases of copper and other thefts from the areas near and in Green Springs, Fremont, Clyde, Bellevue, Perkins Township, and Castalia. The theft ring operated between March and December, 2010. The offenders had been indicted in April, 2011.

Others convicted in this series of crimes included Mark Rollins, fourteen (14) counts of Breaking & Entering and one count of RICO. Rollins also received a prison term of eight (8) years. Defendant Chris Grover was convicted of eight (8) counts of Breaking & Entering and one count of RICO. He received a prison term of seven (7) years. Allen Dirnberg was convicted of three (3) counts of Breaking & Entering and was sentenced to thirty (30) months in prison. Pelmer Owens was convicted of two (2) counts of Breaking and Entering and was sentenced to twelve (12) months in prison. Owens had also been sentenced to additional prison time for convictions from Richland County. Franklin Combs was convicted of two (2) counts of Breaking & Entering and was sentenced to eighteen (18) months imprisonment. Finally, Amy Keegan was convicted of one count of Breaking & Entering and was sentenced to three years of community control sanctions.

All of those convicted were ordered to pay restitution to the various victims by Judge Steve Shuff of the Seneca County Common Pleas Court.

"Our office was approached in December 2010 by Chief Horne from Green Springs, Detective Roach from Clyde Police Department and other law enforcement officers about taking all of these cases in a single county to streamline prosecution of the offenders", said Derek W. DeVine. "We were pleased to take these cases because of the depth of the crimes involved and the superior investigations". DeVine was especially complimentary of Chief Horne saying, "Chief Horne took the lead on this multi-county case with Detective Roach despite being from the smallest department involved. Charlie went above and beyond to make sure that these offenders were prosecuted for their crimes." DeVine further confirmed that many of the offenders were using the proceeds from these crimes to fund drug addictions. "For some of these offenders the thefts were to fund their addiction to illegal prescription drugs. And in at least one case, that addiction to illegal prescription drugs led to heroin addiction".