



Fresno County Sheriff's Department

Richard Pierce, Sheriff **Thursday 6-27-06**
News Release

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Update on Operation Heavy Metal

The Fresno County Sheriff's Department Metal Theft Task Force is in its fourth week of Operation Heavy Metal. The goal of the operation is to dramatically decrease the amount of metal thefts occurring in and around Fresno County and to ensure that the scrap metal businesses are in compliance with the law. The Fresno County Sheriff's Department has been working with several agencies in the valley to combat this crime which is on the rise. Detectives from the Metal Theft Task Force have been educating citizens on how not to be victimized multiple times and more importantly the detectives are proactively patrolling the scrap metal yards. These techniques have proven to be successful in deterring criminal activity and identifying suspects.

Over the past 21 days detective's efforts during Operation Heavy Metal have yielded 60 field interview contacts, 18 Business and Professions violations, issued 22 citations, stored 30 vehicles and arrested 31 suspects for various crimes related to metal theft. Metal Theft Task Force Detectives have served several search warrants that have aided in the recovery of thousands of pounds of copper wire and aluminum wire and arrested suspects that have been responsible for thefts at PG&E, Bruno's Scrap Metal, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Rail Road, and various farmers in the Central Valley.

Early this morning Deputy Rich Conningsby and Deputy Doug Bolton responded to a suspicious vehicle outside of the City of Kerman near a PG&E substation. The vehicle was determined to be involved in a theft at the substation and the owner of the vehicle was on felony probation for possessing stolen property. The owners of the vehicle, Douglas Jackson (40 yrs) of Fresno, Brittany Gosselin (38 yrs), and Jimmy Shirley (41 yrs) were arrested in connection with the theft at the substation. Deputy Conningsby and Deputy Bolton escorted Jackson back to his residence and discovered about 200 pounds of copper wire, PG&E tools, and documents related to other substation locations in Fresno County. Metal Theft Task Force detectives responded to assist in interviews with the above suspects. Jackson was arrested for PC 459 – burglary, PC 487 – Grand theft, PC 496 – Possession of Stolen property, and PC 594 – Vandalism. Gosselin was arrested for PC 487 – Grand theft, PC 496 – Possession of stolen property, and PC 594 – Vandalism. Shirley was arrested for a outstanding warrant. The amount of damage caused by the suspects to the PG &E substation was in excess of \$20,000.

The Fresno County Sheriff's Department is asking for the public's help in curbing metal theft. If you have any information regarding any type of metal theft please call the Sheriff's Department at (559) 896-2003 and ask for Detective Lewis Pipkin or Sergeant Greg Gularte. Any media inquiries can be directed to Sergeant G. Gularte or Lieutenant M. Padilla at (559) 896-2003.