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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Partnership Can Help Stop Copper Thieves

Leon County- A newly formed partnership between the Leon County Sheriff's Office and Leon Iron and Metal, a local second hand metal recycler, will make it more difficult for copper thieves to profit from their crimes.

"The price of scrap copper is so high now" said Sgt. Larry Folsom of the Leon County Sheriff's Office Property Unit, "that thieves will take anything made out of copper that they can get their hands on. We've had reports of air conditioner units being stolen for the copper coils inside them, rolls of wire being stolen from construction sites and even wire being cut right out of the walls of houses under construction."

Florida Statutes require Secondary Metal Dealers to keep certain records of their purchases of scrap metal. People selling scrap copper must provide a government issued photo ID and sign a statement reading that they are the rightful owner of said scrap metal. Leon Iron and Metal has been diligent about keeping these records, and those records have previously been available for inspection by law enforcement. Searching those records historically was done by hand which was a time consuming process, especially for law enforcement officers from other jurisdictions.

Leon Iron and Metal has now taken the record keeping process a step further by allowing the Leon County Sheriff's Office to collect these tickets for entry into a computerized secondhand dealers program. This program known as the North Florida Pawn Network, or "E-Pawn" system is accessible by 28 law enforcement agencies.

Sheriff Larry Campbell said "this is a powerful weapon against copper theft. We hope partnerships such as this spread to other local agencies and metal recyclers that participating in the E-Pawn network".

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