



Crime Stoppers of S.E. Michigan

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Crime Stoppers, County Sheriffs and AT&T Join Forces to Fight Copper Theft

*Awareness campaign aimed at collecting tips, stopping copper crime*



**DETROIT, May 15, 2008** - Crime Stoppers of Southeast Michigan, the sheriffs of Wayne, Macomb and Oakland counties and AT&T announced today they have teamed up and launched a public campaign to stop the proliferation of copper wire theft, unveiling new billboards on highways in the tri-county area to draw attention and encourage action around the escalating issue.

The billboard is direct in its message that copper theft is a crime: “Steal Wire? Steal Copper? Steel Bars.” The goal is to encourage Michigan residents to report incidents of copper theft to the Crime Stoppers hotline – 1-800-SPEAK-UP. Calls to the hotline are anonymous; there is a reward up to \$1000 if there is an arrest based on this information.

“We have seen a significant increase in the occurrence of copper wire theft and metal theft in general in the Detroit-metro area, and we hope this campaign will encourage people to do something about it,” said John Broad, president of Crime Stoppers of SE Michigan.

For  
in copper

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percent increase  
service

outages for entire neighborhoods, impacting hundreds and even thousands of customers. Power outages can knock out traffic signals, posing a serious traffic safety threat. And, in the event of an emergency, affected telephone customers are not able to call 9-1-1 for assistance.

“Stealing telephone and electric service cables is presenting an incredibly hazardous situation for our residents and our neighborhoods,” said Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans. “This issue goes beyond being just a simple property crime because of the impact it has on our neighborhoods, businesses and homeland security.”

“I am pleased to join with the sheriffs from my neighboring counties, Crime Stoppers of Southeast Michigan and AT&T to help solve this growing crime trend,” said Macomb County Sheriff Mark Hackel. “Copper theft has been on the rise and I am hopeful that this campaign will raise public awareness on the issue and encourage people to report copper and other metal thefts.”

Echoing those sentiments, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said, “Copper theft is a threat to the safety and security of residents throughout the state; we need to work together to put an end to this dangerous crime.”

AT&T Michigan President Gail Torreano praised the sheriff’s for their willingness to come together to support the effort to stop metal theft. She also encouraged the Legislature to take action quickly on pieces of metal theft legislation sponsored by state Sen. Buzz Thomas, state Rep. Andy Meisner and others.

“I am thrilled that our local sheriffs have joined together to help stop this crime which has tremendously wide-reaching affects,” Torreano said. “I also encourage our legislators in Lansing to pass the pending metal theft legislation as soon as possible.”

Among other things, pending legislation would increase penalties for those caught knowingly buying or selling stolen copper and require scrap processors keep scrap metal on-site for a certain length of time in case it is evidence in a metal theft investigation.

The billboards are located at:

- **Macomb County:** I-94, east of Joy Blvd. and Groesbeck south of Stephens
- **Oakland County:** I-75 north of Holly Rd. and Woodward Ave. north of 9 Mile Rd
- **Wayne County:** Lodge Freeway at Baltimore and I-94 east of Middlebelt Rd.

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