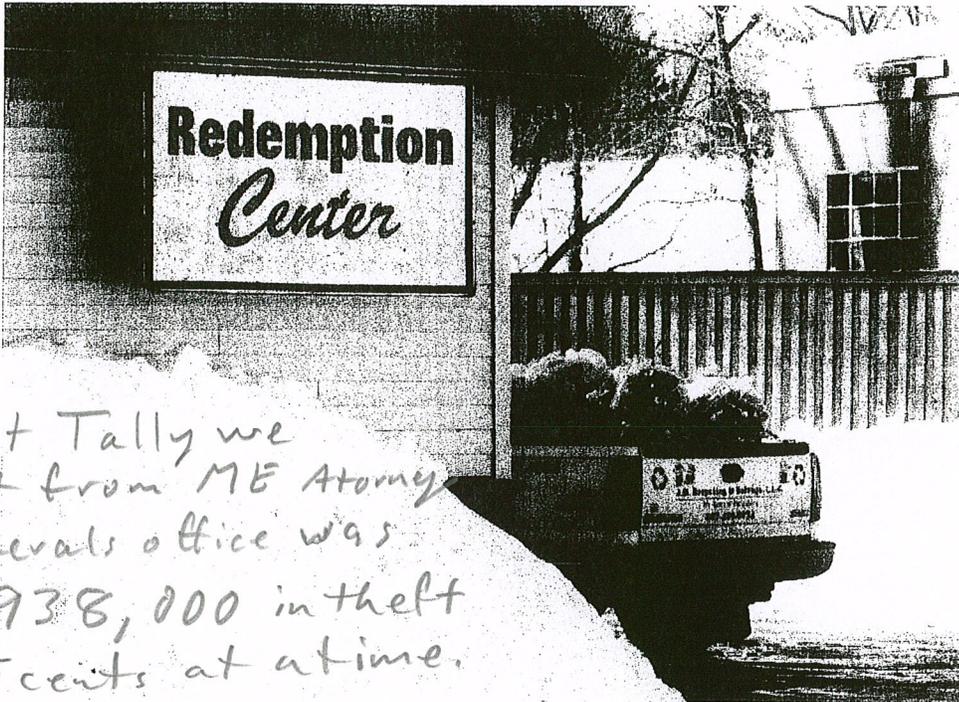


BANGOR DAILY NEWS

Alleged \$10K bottle redemption scam spurs criticism of system



Joel Page | AP

AP PHOTO BY JOEL PAGE A truck carrying bottles and cans pulls into Green Bee Redemption, a recycling center in Kittery on Friday. A couple that runs the center and a Massachusetts man were indicted this week for allegedly redeeming beverage containers in Maine that were bought in other states without a redemption fee.

By Matt Wickenheiser, BDN Staff
Posted Feb. 11, 2011, at 10:00 p.m.

SOUTH PORTLAND, Maine— Recent indictments connected to an alleged scheme to dupe the state's bottle redemption program highlights weaknesses in the system, officials in the beverage distribution business said Friday.

The group, led by the Maine Beverage Association and the Maine Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, held a news conference to discuss incidents of fraud — the most recent case of which involves a Kittery couple allegedly passing off more than \$10,000 worth of out-of-state containers as if they had been purchased in Maine.

Industry officials noted the significant annual costs to the industry and proposed a review of the bottle redemption system in Maine.

"If our goal as a state is to significantly reduce the cost to recycle and increase the number of items that are recycled, it might be a good time to explore other possible options, as has been done and is going on in other states, including Vermont, Iowa and specifically Delaware, who repealed their bottle bill last year and replaced it with a comprehensive recycling program," said Newell Augur, executive director of the Maine Beverage Association, speaking at Coca Cola Maine's distribution facility.

Augur said Sen. David Hastings III, R-Fryeburg, has filed a resolve to convene the stakeholders and look at the bottle redemption system.

The groups used the indictment, said to be the first time criminal charges have been filed in the state regarding bottle-refund fraud, as a backdrop in their efforts to have the bottle bill revisited.

Thomas and Megan Woodard, who run Green Bee Redemption in Kittery, face the more serious charge of allegedly passing off more than 100,000 out-of-state containers — with a value of more than \$10,000 — as if they had been purchased in Maine.

The Woodards did not return calls to their home seeking comment.

They are accused of knowingly accepting containers at their redemption center that were purchased in another state, and therefore not eligible for a refund in Maine, and then selling them to distributors for the combined handling and redemption fees.

Peter Prybot, a 62-year-old lobsterman and writer from Gloucester, Mass., denied the allegations in the indictment, which charges him with redeeming more than \$1,000 of empty containers in Maine that weren't eligible to be redeemed.

Prybot said he accumulated cans and bottles during road trips to Maine and later cashed them, but said they all came from Maine.

The investigation started last year, when Ray Dube, redemption recovery manager for Coca Cola Northern New England, got a tip that someone was bringing loads of bottles into Maine. Dube, who attended Friday's press conference, told the Bangor Daily News that he looked into the allegation and then contacted state officials in Maine.

He watched the suspect for several nights, and then, last spring, observed him backing his SUV up and loading a trailer full of bottles. He followed the man across the bridge into Maine, having previously contacted the state and Kittery police. The man pulled into a Kittery address and began to unload his trailer, and police approached him, Dube said.

Dube would not reveal more details, but did say that the man he followed was not one of the people indicted. Augur said during the news conference that he believed more indictments may be forthcoming.

Dube said it was "absolutely" gratifying to see this sort of resolution on a bottle case. He said he investigates a number of different scams, including the trucking in of out-of-state bottles.

"There is so much of this, it's so expensive for us — it's organized," he said.

Augur said the state estimates the system contains about \$8 million in fraud annually.

Roughly a billion containers under the bottle bill are sold in Maine each year, he said. Ninety percent of those bottles are recycled through the bottle bill system. Roughly 10 percent of those, or 90 million containers, are fraudulently brought in from other states, Augur said.

"It's a tremendous cost. More significantly, it's a cost that's ultimately passed on to the Maine consumer in the form of higher prices," he said.

The system also is inefficient, he said. There are essentially two, duplicative systems for recycling — one to handle bottle bill containers, the other to handle other recyclables.

Three fleets of trucks collect and ship bottles under the bottle bill — one for members of the Maine Beverage Association, one for Maine Beer and Wine Wholesalers and one for companies without an organization.

The distributors would prefer to have a robust recycling system, wherein they would not be processing the empties. Rather, those would be handled by communities and co-ops such as a nonprofit waste management company owned and operated by 21 municipalities in southern Maine. And the money for recycling the aluminum and plastics would go to the communities, offsetting costs, Augur said. Currently, the distributors are getting \$1,600 per ton of aluminum, he said.

There are 800 licensed redemption centers in Maine, and roughly 500 of them are in operation at a time, Augur said. He said he thought the legislation his group sponsored suggests that stakeholders look at how those businesses could be compensated if the bottle bill changes, or at ways those businesses could evolve to handle new recycling needs.

"We don't claim to know the answer to that, but we do think that given the level of inefficiency, given the amount of fraud, it ought to be something we look at," said Augur.

Christian Milneil, communications manager for Maine Audubon, questioned the need to change the current system. His group was involved in passing the original bottle bill decades ago. And, he said, the bottle redemption system has been improved recently with the addition of automation through companies such as Clynk of South Portland.

"The private sector is taking care of a lot of efficiency issues. There are probably better things for government to focus on — this is not the most pressing issue facing the state's economy," he said. "I think a lot of people would prefer if we left well enough alone.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<http://bangordailynews.com/2011/02/11/business/alleged-scam-spurs-criticism-of-bottle-bill/> printed on October 17, 2011

August 18

Illegal bottles came in, but did center owners know?

The defendants' attorneys say no, but prosecutors in \$10,000 Maine theft trials try to show otherwise.

By Leslie Bridgers lbridgers@pressherald.com

Staff Writer

ALFRED - On the night of March 18, 2010, Dennis Reed towed a trailer carrying 56 bags filled with more than 11,000 empty bottles and cans from his sports complex in Derry, N.H., to the office of Green Bee Redemption in Kittery, where he unloaded them into a box truck parked behind the building, according to testimony Wednesday by an inspector from the Maine Department of Agriculture.

WHAT'S NEXT: Additional testimony and closing arguments are expected when the trials resume today in York County Superior Court.

The question is whether former Green Bee owners Megan and Thomas Woodard knew the delivery was coming from out of state and allowed it so they could receive handling fees for redeeming the out-of-state containers, which is illegal because no Maine deposit had been paid out when the beverages were purchased.

Randy Trahan, who is in charge of inspecting Maine redemption centers and enforcing the state's bottle law, had set up surveillance of the sports complex after receiving a tip from one of its employees that the business was sorting its empty beverage containers and hauling them away. New Hampshire has no container deposit law.

Trahan will continue testifying today in York County Superior Court in the trials of the Woodards, who are accused of stealing more than \$10,000 from Maine manufacturers, distributors and collection agents by paying refunds to customers and collecting handling fees on bottles and cans that were purchased out of state, with no deposits paid, from 2008 to 2010.

A 5-cent deposit is added to the price of most bottled and canned drinks sold in Maine. Bottles of wine and spirits carry a 15-cent deposit. Customers can get the deposits refunded by returning the containers to Maine redemption centers, which are paid a handling fee of 3 or 3.5 cents per container.

The Woodards' attorneys say they were unaware they had received containers that were not purchased in Maine.

Reed, the owner of SportsZone, a New Hampshire indoor sports complex, was indicted by a York County grand jury in July for allegedly stealing more than \$1,000 from manufacturers, distributors and collection agents. He is scheduled to appear in York County Superior Court on the theft charge in October.

Larry Gillis and Peter Ogilvie, former Green Bee employees, testified on Wednesday, the second day of the trial, that they had no dealings with customers dropping containers off after hours at the Green Bee office on U.S. Route 1. The Green Bee redemption center, where customers typically dropped off containers, is at a different location on Old Post Road, less than a mile away from the office.

Gillis and Ogilvie also said they were unaware that their former co-worker, Thomas Prybot, was bringing large quantities of containers from his home in Gloucester, Mass., to Green Bee, where he had been working two days a week. Massachusetts does have a bottle law, but deposits are added only to the price of beer, malt and carbonated beverages -- not water, juice or sports drinks, as Maine does.

Prybot, 22, testified Tuesday that he received several checks for hundreds of dollars, written by Megan Woodard, for those containers. The state agreed not to prosecute Prybot in exchange for his testimony in the Woodard trials.

Prybot said the Woodards never explicitly asked him where he purchased the containers he redeemed.

Reed had filled out a form saying his containers came from Maine. Green Bee employees were instructed to hand the form to customers who arrived at the redemption center in vehicles with out-of-state license plates.

Gillis said he didn't know who Dennis Reed was. Ogilvie said he had one encounter with Reed, and it was during Green Bee's normal operating hours, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. He said Reed arrived at Green Bee with a trailer filled with bags of empty containers. He said he asked Reed where the containers were from, because Reed's vehicle had New Hampshire license plates.

Although there is nothing obvious on each beverage container to show where it was purchased, some containers do have markings that indicate where they were sold, said Trahan, the Maine bottle law enforcer. "(It's) not rocket science, but it's a science," he said.

Ogilvie said Reed told him the containers were from Maine, and that he was transporting them in his brother's vehicle because his wasn't big enough to haul them. Ogilvie said Reed told him he was already "in the system," meaning he'd previously filled out a form saying his containers were from Maine. Ogilvie said he took Reed at his word and let him drop off the containers. Reed then left a slip of paper saying how much money he was owed on a desk at the redemption center.

Ogilvie and Gillis said they always paid customers in cash and never wrote checks to them.

They said Thomas Woodard would come into the redemption center in the morning to fill the register with cash, then leave and periodically show up during the day. They said they'd seen Megan Woodard no more than a couple of times in the years that they worked at Green Bee.

Megan Woodard's attorney, Walter McKee, said neither she nor her husband plan to testify during their trials. Attorneys said Wednesday they expected to give their closing arguments today, after testimony from Trahan and Detective Bruce Densmore from the Maine Attorney General's Office.

Superior Court Justice Carl O. Bradford is presiding over the trial, which is being heard by two juries, one for Megan Woodard's case and one for Thomas Woodard's case. The couple, who lived in Kittery, have sold the redemption center and are in the process of moving out of state, according to their attorneys.

Staff Writer Leslie Bridgers can be contacted at 791-6364 or at:

lbridgers@mainetoday.com

Man guilty, wife innocent in redemption scam

By [Leslie Bridgers](mailto:Leslie.Bridgers@pressherald.com)
Staff Writer

ALFRED -- A Kittery man was found guilty Friday while his wife was acquitted on charges of stealing more than \$10,000 in refunds and handling fees for beverage containers that were brought to their redemption center from out of state.

The verdicts were handed up in York County Superior Court by two separate juries in the state's first criminal trial over bottle redemption fraud, a prevalent problem along Maine's border.

Assistant Attorney General Leanne Robbin tried to prove during the four-day trial that Megan and Thomas Woodard, former owners of Green Bee Redemption in Kittery, had helped to set up satellite redemption centers at an indoor sports complex in Derry, N.H., and at their employee's home in Gloucester, Mass.

She presented pictures of the elaborate container-sorting operations at both of those locations and evidence to show that Dennis Reed, owner of the SportsZone in Derry, N.H., and Thomas Prybot, the redemption center employee, had arrangements with the Woodards to drop off large quantities of containers outside normal operating hours.

Robbin said Reed and Prybot were paid by check for redeeming more than 100,000 containers from 2008 to 2010.

The Woodards' attorneys said the couple didn't know the containers had been purchased out of state. Green Bee had on file a form filled out by Reed, saying the containers had come from sports complexes in Maine. Prybot testified Tuesday that the Woodards never asked him where his containers had been bought.

Maine customers pay 5-cent deposits to beverage distributors when they buy most canned and bottled drinks. Wine and liquor bottles carry 15-cent deposits.

In Massachusetts, deposits are paid only on beer, malt and carbonated beverages, not on water, juice and sports drinks, as they are in Maine. There are no deposits on bottle and cans bought in New Hampshire.

About \$8 million in bottle redemption fraud occurs annually in Maine, said Newell Augur, executive director of the Maine Beverage Association. The illegal activity is concentrated in towns along the state's border, where residents from Maine and New Hampshire can easily buy beverages in New Hampshire without deposits and redeem the containers in Maine for refunds.

Some companies mark containers to indicate where they are sold but, for the most part, it's hard to tell. The state instructs redemption centers to post warning signs saying it is illegal to redeem out-of-state containers and to question customers with out-of-state license plates.

"The whole bottle bill is built on the honor system," Augur said. "When people have dishonorable intentions, the whole thing breaks down."

Green Bee posted the warning signs and asked customers with out-of-state plates to fill out forms saying where in Maine they had bought the containers they were redeeming.

Robbin said any redemption center owner would have been suspicious of the quantity of bottles and cans dropped off by Reed and Prybot, which ranged from 3,400 to 10,900 containers per load, knowing that both men lived out of state.

She said the Woodards allowed the illegal drop-offs to collect handling fees from distributors. At the time of the drop-offs, that fee was 3 or 3.5 cents per container, depending on the beverage manufacturer.

Each of the Woodards was indicted in February on a charge of theft by deception. They were accused on stealing more than \$10,000 from Maine beverage manufacturers, distributors and their collection agents, including Pepsi Bottling Group, National Distributors and Returnable Services.

Reed was indicted in July on a charge of stealing more than \$1,000 from Maine distributors. He is scheduled to appear in York County Superior Court in October. The state agreed not to prosecute Prybot in exchange for his testimony.

Robbin said Friday that she was approached before the Woodards' case and asked to set up stings of redemption centers along Maine's border, but never felt there was enough evidence to prosecute a significant crime.

The investigation into Green Bee began with a tip from an employee of SportsZone that the business was sorting and hauling out empty containers by the trailer-full. Robbin said that led the state to collect "the strongest evidence we have in the most egregious case we know of at the time."

Records of cell phone calls between Thomas Woodard and Dennis Reed were among the evidence that made the state's case stronger against Thomas Woodard than his wife, Robbin said.

Also, employees testified that Thomas Woodard was more involved with the business than his wife, who was the legal owner of Green Bee. They said Thomas Woodard filled the register at Green Bee every morning and showed up periodically during the day. They said they met Megan Woodard no more than a couple of times.

"The victory is bittersweet for Megan. She is, of course, very pleased that her jury found she didn't commit theft, but it is tough to celebrate, given that her husband was convicted," said Walter McKee, Megan Woodard's lawyer.

Thomas Woodard's attorney, Leonard Sharon, declined to talk about the case Friday and said the Woodards had no comment.

Robbin said she will pursue jail time for Thomas Woodard, whose sentencing has not yet been scheduled.

Augur said he hopes the case will raise awareness about Maine's bottle bill and serve as a warning to those who violate it.

"Hopefully, this verdict will also send a message to redemption centers that they should redouble their efforts for making sure this type of fraud doesn't take place," he said. "There are more Green Bees out there."

75¢

Featuring the finest original writing in the North Country

Post Std.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #1
N. Haverhill, NH

Postal Patron
Local

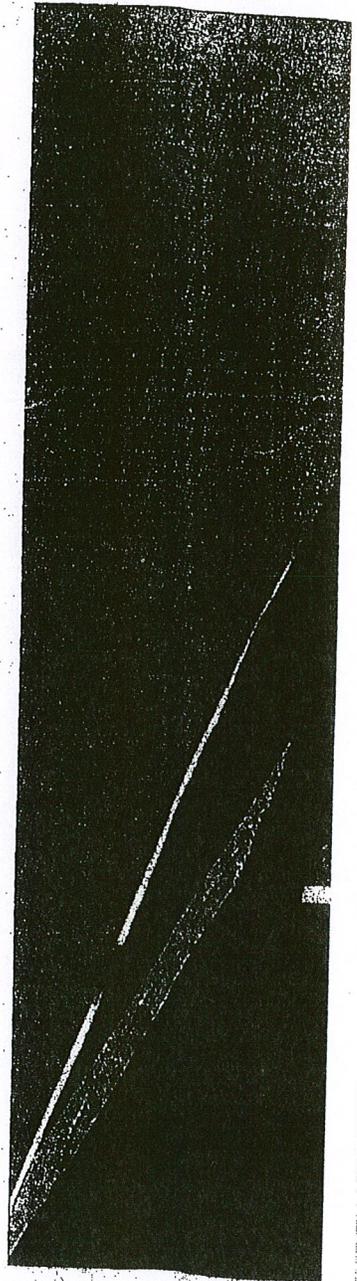


This copy consists of quite a few on A4 paper

EAST CHARLESTON, VERMONT

VOLUME 37 NUMBER 4 • JULY 2 - JULY 15, 2008

ST. JOHNSBURY, VERMONT



ALL BAGGED, over \$1000 worth of Maine returnable bottles, \$500. 802-334-1514

ABEKA full grade 3, 4, 5 & 6 w/ teacher-keys; high school Spanish & algebra I. 603-638-4103

1977 DODGE CUSTOM club cab truck, ran daily, \$500 obo. Jcv 800 x 200m camcorder, \$170 obo. Little people car, battery operated, \$50 obo; also 4-wheeler, \$20. obo. Tricycle w/ parent-control handle, \$30 obo. 603-237-4922, lv message

SEVERAL BOXES of old Hot Rod, Carcraft, Motor Trend, Muscle Car magazines from 1960s to 1980s, best offer. Several boxes of older sport shooting-type magazines, Guns & Ammo, American Rifleman, etc, best offer 802-244-6485.

OLD DOLLHOUSE w/ furniture. Chest freezer, 3 yrs old. 802-334-2505.

OLD OAK office desk w/ chair, \$75. 6" Craftsman planer, \$150. 802-525-4609.

LIFE JACKETS, all types & sizes, \$5-8. Boat fenders, white, \$8 ea. 2-wheel hand truck, \$15. Flagpole, alum telescoping, \$20. Beer tap sanky pump, fits most kegs, \$35. 802-888-1718.

Crafts and Supplies Hobbies & Collectibles

SPORT CARDS: baseball, basketball, football, about 40 compl sets, 1979-2003; 20 boxes of wax packs & thousands of loose cards individually priced, all items selling for 50% of book price or lower; list avail. Dick Keene, 802-223-2471

BLACK AMETHYST glass collection: too many pieces to list, really want to sell so someone is going to get a great deal. 802-888-9284

LIONEL TRAIN TW transformer, also misc pieces & accessories; Marx freight cars. 802-744-6134

FREE KILN to good cause: L&L Econokaln, 4 shelves. 802-454-7711

DALE EARNHARDT 1993 Brookfield train set, in factory-sealed box, never opened, appraised at \$560; selling for \$245. 802-744-6134

COMMERCIAL SEWING MACHINE, stand and motor, have several different models on hand, single needle, 5 thread serger, single

<<Back



Town dump manager charged with theft

LEE, N.H. The town transfer station manager in Lee (New Hampshire) has been charged with stealing recyclables to sell for his own profit, not the town's.

Police Chief Chet Murch says 47-year-old James Andersen was arrested last week after officers saw him put metals, aluminum cans, plastic and glass bottles into his truck and drive out of the transfer station with his headlights off.

The town has put Andersen on paid administrative leave pending the investigation.

Information from: Foster's Daily Democrat, <http://www.fosters.com>

Copyright 2006 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.



All content © Copyright 2001 - 2006 WorldNow and WCAAX. All Rights Reserved.
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).

Beer distributors win \$630,000 jury award

Firm accused of bringing bottles, cans from Maine and redeeming them second time

By John H. Kennedy
GLOBE STAFF

Two Massachusetts beer distributors have won a \$630,000 jury award from a company and its owner accused of importing empty bottles and cans from Maine and redeeming them a second time.

The distributors, Merrimack Valley Distributing Co. of Danvers and Martin Distributing Co. of Shirley, return to Essex Superior Court on Tuesday to seek treble damages under the state's unfair business practices law.

The case tracked millions of cans and bottles taken after consumers logged the returnable empties to stores or redemption centers and collected a nickel per container. Local package stores or redemption

centers, in turn, cart the empties to distributors like Merrimack Valley and Martin Distributing and collect about 7 cents per container, including a 2 1/4-cent handling charge.

But the two beer distributors allege they were victims of a scam that defrauded them and exploited the returnable container system.

They filed their lawsuit in 1938, claiming three companies and their principals profited from a scheme to buy already redeemed containers in Maine. Although the containers were bought as scrap for 1 to 3 cents per container, they were trucked to Massachusetts and sold to the distributors as unredeemed cans and bottles at 7 cents each, the companies say. At the time, the handling charge was 2 cents per container.

"This has been a problem not

only in Massachusetts, but in other states" with bottle bills, said H. Glenn Alberich, a lawyer representing the distributors.

"What these people have realized is that a can or bottle is like legal tender," said Alberich, of the firm LeBoeuf Lamb Leiby & MacRae. "Every one of them is worth 7 cents. It's like coinage; it's money."

After a four-day jury trial ending April 12, a jury found that Salisbury Redemption Center and one of its owners, Bruce Ghedoni, defrauded both Merrimack Valley, which was awarded \$430,000, and Martin Distributing, which got \$200,000.

But the jury also found a violation of the state's unfair business practices law by Salisbury Redemption Center, Ghedoni, plus two other businesses, Peabody Redemption

Center, Riverside Enterprises Inc. and their owner, Janet Gilmore.

Essex Superior Judge Elizabeth B. Donovan will be asked to determine those damages Tuesday, because juries are not entitled to set awards under that law. Alberich said the distributors probably will seek treble damages and are entitled to attorneys' fees, which could amount to about \$100,000.

Barry M. Haight, an attorney for Ghedoni and Salisbury Redemption Center, said the jury verdict would probably be appealed. He declined to comment further.

But George O. Gregson, an attorney for Gilmore and the two other companies, said his clients were not part of any scheme, especially since they didn't know where the containers came from. And he said the un-

fair business practices finding against his clients should be dismissed, because the jury did not find they committed fraud against the distributors.

The distributors got suspicious in 1937 and 1938 when their redemption of Salisbury and Peabody containers jumped by 300 to 600 percent, according to court documents.

Wholesalers are required only to redeem containers that were purchased in Massachusetts, industry officials said. But it is virtually impossible to distinguish them from those purchased in other bottle bill states — Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and New York, for example — because the cans and bottles bear the initials of all Northeast states that redeem returnable containers.

Suffolk DA: 7 arrested in bottle/can recycling scam

August 25, 2009 by ALFONSO A. CASTILLO / alfonso.castillo@newsday.com



A scam to take advantage of the state recycling law by redeeming the same bottles and cans over and over again netted seven men millions and millions of dollars, Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota said Tuesday.

Spota said the men have been arrested in connection with the plot following a yearlong investigation. The masterminds include Peter Sidote, 53, of Dix Hills, owner of Party Time beverage in Brentwood, and Joseph Luzzi, 60, of Bayside, Queens, owner of Boro Recycling in Brooklyn.

As part of the scheme, Sidote sent tractor-trailers loaded with crushed bottles and cans to beverage wholesalers, who paid his company a handling fee of 2 cents per bottle. The wholesalers then sent the cans and bottles to Boro Recycling, which was supposed to sell them to plastic, glass and aluminum companies.

But instead, Spota said, Luzzi sent the same shipments of crushed beverage containers back to Sidote, who would again take them to wholesalers and collect his handling fee. Luzzi and Sidote would then split the profit, Spota said.

The two men sent the same crushed cans and bottles "sometimes twice, maybe three times" through the recycling system, said Spota, who was joined by state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo at a news conference Tuesday at the district attorney's office in Hauppauge.

The operation, which Spota said went back several years, grew so big that Sidote recruited other beverage distributors to deliver already redeemed bottles and cans to wholesalers for a cut of the profit.

Spota said that investigators recovered more than \$1 million in cash at the homes and businesses of the seven suspects.

Also arrested were Robert Grady, 44, of East Stroudsburg, Pa., a Boro Recycling employee; Robert Almes, 48, of Islip, owner of Islip Cold Beer Beverage; Kwang Jhong, 42, of Great Neck, owner of S&H Distributors in Central Islip; Joseph Sciara, 44, of Islip, owner of Bellmore Beverage in Bellmore; and Michael Lisi, 47, of Franklin Square, owner of Monarch Beverage in Long Beach.

All are charged with second-degree grand larceny, except for Lisi, who is charged with **third-degree grand larceny**. The men face up to 15 years in prison on the second-degree larceny charges.

Sidote's attorney, Raymond Perini of Hauppauge, disputed the charges and said his client ran a legitimate business.

Perini added that Budweiser beer distributor Clare Rose Inc. of Patchogue - which provided information that helped prosecutors develop their case - stood to profit by putting Sidote out of business, because then it would no longer have to pay him 2 cents per returned container. "They had monetary interest in stopping Peter Sidote's operation," Perini said.

Officials at Clare Rose did not return a call for comment.

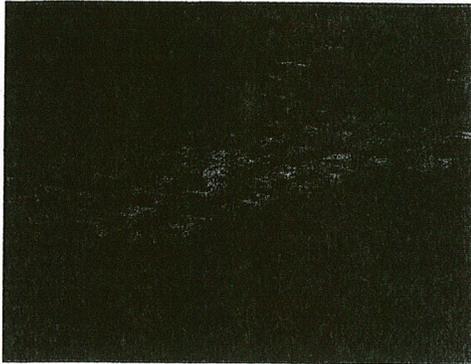
[< back to article](#)

- [BEST OF LI](#)
- [ABOUT](#)
- [ADVERTISE](#)
- [CONTACT](#)

LI Beverage Dealers Arrested In Bottle Deposit Scam



Written by [Jaclyn Gallucci](#) on Aug 26th, 2009 and filed under [Long Island News](#), [News](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through [RSS 2.0](#). You can leave a response or trackback to this entry



Eight Long Island men have been arrested for their involvement in an elaborate scheme to redeem cans, bottles and other recyclable beverage containers repeatedly as a way of stealing millions of dollars from Pepsi, Anheuser-Busch, Miller Brewing Company, their wholesalers and other corporations, Suffolk prosecutors announced Tuesday. And now, the investigation is going statewide.

“It’s a profitable perversion of New York’s beverage container recycling law and we suspect it’s been going on for years,” said District Attorney Thomas Spota.

Under the control and direction of 60-year-old Joseph Luzzi, owner and operator of Boro Recycling in Bayside, beverage dealers were recruited to illegally re-redeem bottles and cans. Peter Sidote, 53, of Dix Hills, the owner and operator of Party Time Beverage in Brentwood, is suspected of being the central Long Island broker for the operation.

Each bottle and can illegally re-redeemed, brought in a 7-cent profit. More than \$1 million in cash has been recovered, some packed in cigar boxes hidden in the bottom of office paper shredders, according to investigators.

“This is Bernie Madoff meets the recycling industry,” said Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who has broadened the investigation started by Spota to the entire state and issued a first round of subpoenas to companies in the bottle recycling business. “By all indications the alleged corruption being announced today is not limited to Suffolk County.”

The bottle and can recycling system is arranged so that beverage distributors pay beverage retailers for every empty bottle or can that the retailers return to the distributors. The distributors, in turn, send the empty bottles to be recycled. Some distributors hire a middleman recycling company to physically collect and transport the empty bottles to recycling centers. Each redeemed bottle is worth five cents—which comes from a deposit that retailers pay when purchasing the bottle and then collect from consumers—plus an additional handling fee of two cents.

Under the new “Bigger, Better Bottle Bill,” 80 percent of the unclaimed deposits that distributors garner are now turned over to the NYS budget. The state has estimated that about \$150 million per year will go back to the state in the form of those funds. On a statewide scale, this kind of scheme could be costing the budget millions of dollars, Cuomo says.

“It’s stealing from the people of this state,” he added. “When you steal from the state, you steal from the tax payers.”

Sidote and Luzzi were charged with grand larceny, as well as Robert Grady, 44, of East Stroudsburg Pennsylvania, an employee of Boro Recycling who allegedly acted as the liaison between Luzzi, Sidote and the other beverage retailers.

Other beverage dealers charged with grand larceny are Robert Almes, 48, owner and operator of Islip Cold Beer, in Islip, Kwang Jhong, 42, owner and operator of S&H Distributors in Central Islip, Joseph Sciara, 44, owner and operator of Bellmore Beverage in Bellmore, and Michael Lisi, 47, owner and operator of Monarch Beverage in Long Beach.

[Follow the author on Twitter!](#)



Michigan Officials Bust Bottle-Deposit Fraud Ring

Friday , September 28, 2007

FOX NEWS

DETROIT —

ADVERTISEMENT

They did what Kramer and Newman of "Seinfeld" could not.

Thirteen people have been arrested in connection with a smuggling ring that collected millions of beverage containers in other states and cashed them in for 10 cents apiece in Michigan as part of a scam straight out of a "Seinfeld" episode, authorities said Wednesday.

Authorities seized more than \$500,000 in cash and 15 people were named in a 67-count warrant issued as part of Operation Can Scam, Attorney General Mike Cox said Wednesday. Some suspects were members of two smuggling rings based in Ohio and others were Michigan merchants who took part in the scheme, he said.

The probe recalled a 1996 episode of "Seinfeld" in which two characters learn about Michigan's 10-cent deposit law and head there with a truckload of 5-cent New York cans, hoping to cash in on the difference, before getting sidetracked.

"A half-million in cash is not 'Seinfeld' humor," Cox spokesman Matt Frendewey said.

Investigators alleged that millions of non-redeemable out-of-state cans were collected, crushed, packaged in plastic bags and sold at a discount to merchants who then redeemed them. Bulk redemption payments from the state are based on weight.

The scheme defrauded the Michigan Bottle Deposit Fund, whose proceeds are used to pay for environmental cleanup efforts, Cox said in a statement.

"Each year, this type of activity defrauds the state approximately \$13 million," said Col. Peter Munoz, Michigan State Police director.

The charges include maintaining a continuing criminal enterprise, a 20-year felony, and fraud, a 5-year felony, the statement said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Powered by

This site has been blocked by the Content Filter.

Please contact the IT Department at 603.627.6170 or 603.627.6163 for access to this site.

SEARCH

GO

[Click here for FOX News RSS Feeds](#)

Advertise on FOX News Channel, FOXNews.com and FOX News Radio

Jobs at FOX News Channel.

Internships At Fox News (Summer Application Deadline is March 15, 2007)

Terms of use. Privacy Statement. For FOXNews.com comments write to foxnewsonline@foxnews.com; For FOX News Channel comments write to comments@foxnews.com

© Associated Press. All rights reserved.

This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Copyright 2010 FOX News Network, LLC. All rights reserved.
All market data delayed 20 minutes.



Smugglers still cashing in on Michigan can refund

Published February 23, 2013 | Associated Press

300x250

LANSING, Mich. -- Michigan lawmakers want to crack down on can and bottle smugglers they say are scamming Michigan for undeserved recycling refunds, corrupting a generous 10-cent per container payback policy once infamously portrayed in a "Seinfeld" episode and which beverage officials now claim costs the state millions of dollars annually.

"Seinfeld" characters Kramer and Newman failed miserably in their comedic attempt to cash in on the refund, when they loaded a mail truck full of cans and bottles in New York and attempted to drive them to Michigan. But lawmakers say it's a serious problem, especially in border counties, and they want to toughen penalties on people who try to return unmarked, out-of-state cans and bottles for refunds.

"If you are intending to defraud ... then you should be held accountable for it," said Republican Rep. Kenneth Kurtz of Coldwater. He recently introduced legislation aimed at cracking down on scammers who drive car and truck loads of cans from Indiana, Wisconsin and Ohio -- states that do not offer refunds -- to stores across the border in Michigan.

His legislation would make an attempt to return between 100 and 10,000 non-returnable containers punishable by up to 93 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Current law sets penalties only for those who actually return fraudulent containers.

Michigan's 10 cent-per-container refund -- the highest in the country -- was enacted more than 30 years ago to encourage recycling. Many say it's worked. The state's recycling rate for cans and bottles was nearly 96 percent in 2011. By contrast, New York, one of nine states with nickel deposits on most containers, saw only a 66.8 percent redemption rate in 2007, the most recent figure available.

Despite measures Michigan lawmakers have taken over the years, including tougher penalties for bottle scammers and new machines that kick out fraudulent cans, store owners and distributors along the border say illegal returns persist.

Mike Hautala owns Hautala Distributing, which services Gogebic and Ontonagon counties in the western part of the Upper Peninsula near the Wisconsin border. He said for every case of beer his distributorship delivers to a store along the border, it picks up about seven more cases of empty cans.

The state loses \$10 million to \$13 million a year to fraudulent redemptions, according to most recent 2007 estimates from the Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association. Angela Madden, the association's director of governmental affairs, said that number has likely gone down slightly because of changes implemented since, but not by much.

Bill Nichols, store director at Harding's Friendly Market in Niles about three miles from the Indiana border, said the store takes in about \$6,000 worth of cans a week. He said every week he kicks out people for trying to return large garbage bags full of cans from Indiana, a state that offers no refund.

"You can go into the parking lot and look at the license plates and see that it says Indiana," he said.

Distributors pick up the containers people drop off at stores and pay the store a dime for every container. If the distributor picks up more bottles and cans than it left -- the likely result of fraudulent redemption -- the distributor is left in the hole, Madden said. If the distributor picks up fewer cans than it dropped off, the money that does not go back to the store is sent to the state. Twenty five percent of that money is sent back to retailers and 75 percent is put in a fund that pays for things like environmental cleanup, she said.

Hautala said he lost about \$25,000 last year picking up more returned containers than he delivered. He said his company will recover some of that money from distributors who sell more containers than they pick up.

In 2008, Michigan passed laws aimed at cracking down on bottle fraud. One of the primary components required manufacturers to place a special mark on Michigan cans and bottles and said those containers could only be sold in Michigan or other states that have deposit laws.

A report the Department of Treasury delivered to Michigan lawmakers last fall estimated that the technology may have helped reduce redemptions of out-of-state containers by nearly 4 percent. But that reduction could also come from decline in sales, the report said.

As containers were given Michigan-specific marks, vending machines used in stores to count the cans and bottles were formatted with new technology to read the mark and reject cans that come in from across the border.

But Madden told the committee that many retailers have not yet taken advantage of the technology. She said while the state has provided funding for business to pay for the \$5,000 machine upgrade, many "just refuse." If a store has an older model machine, they might have to shell out big bucks for a brand new machine that is compatible with the new technology, she said.

Hautala said only four machines are in the two counties his company serves.

And the machines are not "100 percent fool-proof," Nichols said. If a person repeatedly puts an out-of-state can into the machine, it will often accept it, he said.

Michigan is not alone in its fight against bottle fraud. Mark Oldfield, spokesman for California's Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, said the state, which gives a 5-cent refund for most containers and 10 cents for those more than 24 ounces, is losing about \$30 million to \$50 million a year from redeeming out-of-state cans. The state's redemption rate for the first six months of 2012 was 87 percent.

Oldfield said a new law in California this year requires people who bring in more than 25 pounds of aluminum or plastic, or more than 100 pounds of glass, to report the source and the destination of the material to the state. Border patrol stations along the major highways near the border also gather license plate numbers and information of vehicles seen bringing in cans and bottles.

Despite their best efforts to clamp down on fraudulent bottles, a federal lawsuit may shake things up even more. In 2012, a federal appeals court in Cincinnati struck down the Michigan law that makes beverage companies put a special mark on cans sold in the state. It said the Michigan law is illegally affecting interstate commerce by dictating where cans can be distributed.

Joy Yearout, spokeswoman for Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, said the office has requested a stay on the ruling and plans to file a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court in April.

Print Close

URL

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/02/23/smugglers-still-cashing-in-on-michigan-can-refund/>

[Home](#) | [Video](#) | [Politics](#) | [U.S.](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Tech](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Travel](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [World](#) | [Sports](#) | [Weather](#)

[Privacy](#) | [Terms](#)

This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. © 2013 FOX News Network, LLC. All rights reserved. All market data delayed 20 minutes.

Bottle Bills in the News ... By Location ... By Year

May 7, 2010

RESOURCE

RECYCLING

Electronic Newsletter

California nabs 31 in \$3.5 million recycling redemption scam

In a cross-agency operation that involved investigations crossing three state lines, 31 individuals were arrested in connection to three beverage container redemption fraud rings which reportedly took in an excess of \$3.5 million.

Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. made the announcement yesterday with the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) about the operations that caught the three groups — one bringing in beverage containers from Yuma, Arizona, one from the Phoenix area and the largest of the three from Las Vegas.

"Recycling fraud is a crime against California consumers and we take it very seriously," said CalRecycle Director Margo Reid Brown. "Our inspectors work closely with state and local law enforcement to root out and prosecute criminals who steal the money used to repay Californians and support our state's recycling programs. These arrests are evidence that recycling fraud will not be tolerated."

The Las Vegas group was allegedly bringing in approximately 5,000 pounds of empty beverage containers twice-weekly in large rental trucks and shipped to a storage facility in Montclair, California where the containers were distributed to a network of locals who redeemed them. Over the course of roughly three years, this group — of which 15 suspects were arrested — defrauded the state to the tune of an estimated \$2.5 million.

The operation out of the Phoenix area brought beverage containers — many of which contained sand to add weight — defrauded the Golden State's CRV program to the tune of \$1 million and resulted in 12 arrests.

Apparently, the fraud was not without scofflaws on the other side of the redemption desk, as the last operation allegedly worked with a recycling center in California, ACE Recycler in San Diego, the owner and operator of which, Michael Barshak, was one of four arrested in connection to the case.

The investigations resulting in the arrests of the 31 individuals were conducted by the Attorney General's Division of Law Enforcement/Bureau of Investigation and Intelligence (DLE-BII) Major Crimes Team and CalRecycle, with assistance from a cavalcade of additional law enforcement agencies including: The California Highway Patrol, the offices of the San Bernardino and Riverside County Sheriffs, the Riverside County District Attorney's Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Marshals Service and other Department of Justice enforcement teams.

<http://campaign.constantcontact.com/render?v=001x1sb6zOAlu7oZ-7YpQR9MnDnLTVoMDnUk83uCvnb6tOiu7pr1ez18rPQyVBvNAU5IG5dKZZ19xQcMwDijBv3jD3CgDdbzUblppSWpQitMkiPI4wCq2JevxhCzBWCsMn#story1>

© 2007 - 2009 Container Recycling Institute | About Us

Bottle Bills in the News ... By Location ... By Year

October 27, 2010

RESOURCE RECYCLING Electronic Newsletter

California nabs three in bottle bill bust

Bail has been set for three residents of Riverside County, California who have been charged by the state's Attorney General for running a scam to defraud the state's beverage recycling container program out of \$7 million. The owner of Perris Valley Recycling is being held with bail set at \$300,000. Two of his employees ensnared by the AG's investigation are also being held with bail of \$30,000 each.

The AG's office alleges that Perris Valley Recycling took in about 4.4 million pounds of aluminum cans from Arizona, where the metal is only sold for its scrap value, and attempted to cash them in using the California Refund Value deposit, which pays \$1.57 a pound for the cans.

"These people pretended to be recycling California aluminum cans when they were really importing tons of cans from Arizona, which are not eligible for California's recycling refunds," Attorney General Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown Jr. said in a prepared statement. "They brazenly defrauded the state's successful recycling program."

What tipped authorities off was the unusually high amount of cans Perris Valley Recycling collected, sometimes as high as 10,000 pounds per day. As a deterrent to fraud, recycling center must report purchases of more than 250 pounds of aluminum cans to the state's Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). The arrests are a result of an investigation by special agents of the AG's office, working with the CalRecycle and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. The owner and employees of the recycling facility face a total of 18 felony counts on charges including recycling, fraud, grand theft and conspiracy, and each faces seven years in prison if convicted of all the charges. All have entered a plea of not guilty.

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=xys7micab&v=001Msfh5C4b-afig8dvHyJBqt5XAYstkKOrUNAZxL0OuwnsyWupfdJrXWOVFZ1llrm-REe5l_FJl3vxQrvmv7rp2atkaZ8RKhY0OSFkFnWj8l3EM5qRd-8hvw0KUiax.cgu#story3

© 2007 - 2010 Container Recycling Institute | About Us

Bottle Bills in the News ... By Location ... By Year

August 8, 2009

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Companies accused of bilking state recycling program

By DAVID DANELSKI

Operators of an Arizona company with a troubled past in Riverside County are suspected of collecting \$32.6 million in California beverage container redemptions by fraudulently cashing in truckloads of out-of-state plastic bottles.

The owners of the Phoenix-based Mission Fiber Group Inc. trucked in tons of crushed bottles from other states and, working with another company, made claims on the California Redemption Value -- CRV -- fund, according to a 28-page, state Department of Conservation administrative accusation obtained by The Press-Enterprise.

The redemptions occurred over three years ending in 2007, the document says.

Mission Fiber hired an out-of-state trucking firm to bring in bales of bottles that were packed into shipping containers in Fontana and Long Beach. The bales were sold to Burbank Recycling Inc., which submitted CRV claims and shared the proceeds with Mission Fiber, the accusation says.

Officials of the companies could not be reached or declined to comment.

Redemption fund money is raised from the 5- or 10-cent deposits on most soda, sports drinks, juice, beer and water bottles and cans sold in California. The money -- \$1.2 billion last year -- can be reclaimed at certified recycling centers.

Since state redemption funds are collected only on beverage sales in California, seeking reimbursements in California for out-of-state containers is a form of fraud.

Department of Conservation officials declined to elaborate on the document, which was labeled "first amended accusation." The officials would not say whether this was the largest suspected fraud in the program's 22-year history.

Department spokesman Mark Oldfield said the case is in an early phase of information gathering, and that the department would have no comment until the case is resolved. It is being handled administratively and eventually will go to a department hearing examiner, Oldfield said. No hearing date has been set.

The Department of Conservation seeks a return of \$32.6 million, plus interest, and civil penalties totaling \$44.1 million for 8,815 violations of state codes that regulate the recycling program, the document said. The violations include fraudulent use of another company's credentials, falsified documents, making claims on out-of-state containers and failure to inspect loads.

Evan Westrup, a state Department of Justice spokesman, said he would not comment on whether the department is looking into the case.

Attempts to contact the owners of Mission Fiber Group, listed in the accusation document as Stephen Matthew Collins and David Scott Anderson, were unsuccessful. The company is registered with a Phoenix address, according to the Arizona Corporation Commission Web site. Phone lines associated with company addresses in Phoenix and Chandler, Ariz., and in Long Beach all had been disconnected.

Redemption Enterprise

According to the accusation, Mission Fiber used Schneider National Inc., a trucking company based in Green Bay, Wis., to bring the out-of-state beverage containers to Fontana and Long Beach transfer points. After buying the bottles, Burbank Recycling used a Tehachapi recycling firm's state certification number and address to make fraudulent CRV claims, the document says.

Burbank Recycling then routed money to Mission Fiber owners through multiple bank accounts, the document said.

Geoffrey Paul Folsom, listed in the accusation document as the owner of Burbank Recycling, referred questions to his attorney, Hal Wright, who is based in Davis.

"We are in the early stages, and we are optimistic that we did the right things," Wright said. "We don't know exactly what Mission Fiber did, but we've been cooperating."

Blythe mess

Mission Fiber has caught authorities' attention before.

Riverside County Supervisor Roy Wilson said the company stockpiled and abandoned mountains of plastic waste on land just outside of Blythe, a town next to the Colorado River.

By 2007, the waste was piled 14 feet high and covered 6 acres. The expanse of trash was unsightly, smelly, a breeding ground for rats and a serious fire hazard, county officials said. The plastic also blew into nearby alfalfa fields and wound up in bundles of hay.

In a written request for state help, county code enforcement Officer George Gianos said Mission Fiber made a limited attempt to comply with county clean-up orders by moving some of the trash to unpermitted sites in Kern County and in Arizona's La Paz County. But most of it was left behind.

The mess was cleaned up last fall after the county got a grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board. The cost to move 8,550 tons of waste to a legal landfill in Arizona came to \$661,000, and the county seeks reimbursement, said Chris Peck, acting deputy director for the waste management board.

Mission Fiber and the land owner, Western Land & Farming LLC, which has the same address as Mission Fiber, face court orders and judgments seeking \$1.4 million for the clean-up costs and penalties.

In December of 2007, Kern County sheriff's deputies investigated the company for illegal dumping after 15 commercial trucks were seen depositing plastic waste on a patch of desert near the small town of Mojave.

The company later paid Kern County about \$50,000 in penalties and moved the material elsewhere

http://www.pe.com/localnews/inland/stories/PE_News_Local_N_recycle09_4710e6c.html

© 2007 Container Recycling Institute | About Us

BottleBill.org - Bottle Bill Resource Guide
Bottle Bills in the News ... By Location ... By Year

April 15, 2011

High Country News

For people who care about the West

Can bandits: Recycling fraud hits California

by Matt Jenkins

In February 2010, criminal investigators tailed a pair of Penske rental trucks more than 300 miles, from a self-storage facility in Phoenix, Ariz., to a small house on the outskirts of Perris, Calif. They watched as the drivers transferred their loads to two handyman's vans. Then they drove the vans across town to a set of metal warehouses bespangled with razor wire and signs for Perris Valley Recycling.

The contraband involved was not illegal drugs, untaxed cigarettes or stolen flat screens, but a far more prosaic commodity: aluminum cans. Each time someone in California buys a bottle or can of Coke Zero or Fat Tire beer or practically any other beverage, he or she pays a nickel deposit into a statewide pool called the Beverage Container Recycling Fund. That nickel — known as the California Redemption Value, or CRV — is essentially a bounty, to encourage the consumer to return the empty bottle or can to a recycling center.

But all those nickels can add up to serious cash, so the system presents an alluring target for fraudsters. The neighboring states of Nevada and Arizona have lots of thirsty people who generate a mountain of empties each year, but neither state has its own version of the CRV. That disparity has inspired a new industry: Enterprising individuals buy empty cans and bottles in bulk in Arizona and Nevada, at their "scrap" price. Then they truck them across state lines to California, where they collect the nickel-per-container deposit that they never paid into the Recycling Fund in the first place.

If you feel like you've heard about this before, it might be because you saw it on Seinfeld: Fifteen years ago, the show's writers built an entire episode around the premise of Kramer and Newman driving a mail truck full of bottles to Michigan. But can scams are the real deal. One rental truck can hold 10,000 pounds of aluminum cans, worth \$15,000 in CRV. Now, faced with millions of dollars in losses, California authorities are moving aggressively to crush recycling fraud.

"We're fighting for the money that consumers paid, and that they have the right to get back," says Jason Marshall, the deputy director of the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery.

Last year, the department, better known as CalRecycle, and the California Bureau of Investigation — with help from several county sheriff's departments, the California Highway Patrol, and the U.S. Marshals Service — arrested 32 people in five separate cases. Altogether, they had scammed the state out of more than \$10.5 million. The stakeout in Perris ultimately spawned three of those cases and the arrest, on Oct. 12, of Howard Leveson, the owner of Perris Valley Recycling. Authorities estimate that he bilked the state out of \$7 million. They also recovered an illegal Uzis assault rifle in the raid on his office and home.

Investigators say that the big money involved, and the potential for violence, underscores the seriousness of recycling fraud, something that has long been seen as a laughable offense. "People realized," Marshall says, "that this is more than just George and Kramer trying to sneak into Michigan in a mail truck."

Thanks to the CRV, the recycling rate in California has grown from about 65 percent to 82 percent over the past six years. But recently the numbers have been a little too good. About a year and a half ago, auditors noticed that of all the high-density polyethylene plastics (think Odwalla juice) sold in California, 116 percent were being returned for the nickel bounty. That pointed to fraud.

Ironically, the very incentives that have spurred high rates of recycling have also inspired entrepreneurial criminals. Until 2004, the CRV was just 2.5 cents per container. But that year, the Legislature bumped it to 4 cents — and then, in 2007, to a nickel. Or, as Marshall puts it, "Over a four-year period, we doubled the value of that 10,000 pounds that someone wants to roll on in to the state."

Owing to their proximity to California, Phoenix and Las Vegas have become the favored source of raw material for can scams. (Because Oregon has its own version of the CRV, fewer cans are brought in from that state.) In the Phoenix area, one-man buyers — many equipped with little more a wad of cash, a scale and a rented van — are luring customers away from large-scale recyclers by offering higher prices, and are buying bagloads of cans that they then take west.

"People are willing to rob someone for 50 bucks," says Tony DiSanti, who runs a recycling company in Mesa, Ariz. "To make 15 grand? Yeah, they're gonna get a truck to drive it to California."

Recycling fraud not only cheats California consumers out of the nickels that they paid into the Recycling Fund, but also threatens to undermine the entire recycling program itself. The program is, paradoxically, funded by the deposits left over from the cans that Californians don't redeem. When those nickels are claimed fraudulently, however, that threatens to erase the surplus that funds the entire recycling apparatus in California — from the grants CalRecycle makes to support curbside recycling programs right down to the investigations of the agency's fraud squad.

Recycling fraud is a felony when the redemption value of the containers is more than \$400. But in a state that relishes ritualistic cult crime and live-televized car chases, bottle-redemption scams are often met with incredulity, or downright apathy. Marshall admits that it can be difficult to get county district attorneys to take recycling cases: "They go, 'you want me to take a case on can fraud? I've got murderers. I've got drug dealers. I've got scam artists taking the elderly for a ride.'"

To strengthen enforcement, CalRecycle provides funding to the California Bureau of Investigation's Environmental Crimes Unit, which investigates fraud cases, and the state attorney general's office, which prosecutes the cases. CalRecycle is also beefing up its effort to sniff out fraud. The

agency is in the process of adding a "fraud-detection module" to DORIIS, the matronly sounding computer system that processes payment claims from recyclers. The updated program will identify discrepancies like sudden bumps in recycling volumes at individual recycling centers. The department is also working to alert the state's agricultural inspectors, who are already stationed at California's borders, to be on the lookout for smugglers.

Of the 32 people arrested last year, most have been convicted of various charges. Several were deported; several are on the run; and several are still awaiting trial. In March, Howard Leveson — who did not respond to several attempts to contact him for this story — cut a plea bargain with prosecutors to avoid prison time. (He still faces weapon charges.) Leveson will pay \$1.5 million in restitution to the Beverage Container Recycling Fund, plus \$100,000 for the cost of the investigation that brought him down -- and he's forever banned from operating a recycling center in California.

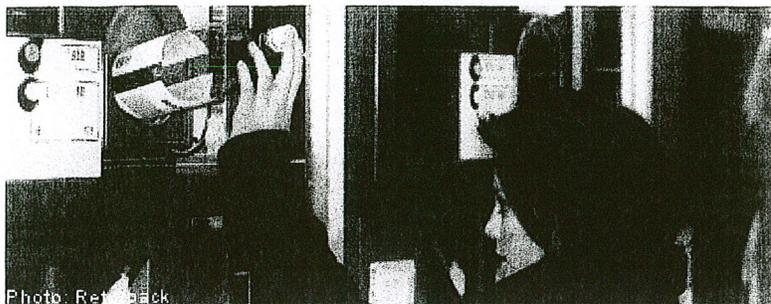
<http://www.hcn.org/hcn/articles/can-bandits-recycling-fraud-hits-california>

© 2007 - 2010 Container Recycling Institute | About Us

The Local

SWEDEN'S NEWS IN ENGLISH

Discuss last updated 2 mins ago



Woman uses fishing line to cheat bottle deposit system

Published: 27 Feb 08 12:34 CET
Online: <http://www.thelocal.se/10132/>

A 42-year-old woman in Köping was caught by a security guard on Tuesday using a fishing line to claim multiple deposits on a single recyclable bottle at a Willys supermarket in the central Swedish town, several local media report.

- **Säpo bodyguard 'shot and missed' reindeer** (25 Feb 08)
- **7-year-old Brit on Arlanda Express joyride** (24 Feb 08)
- **Gender equity hits below the belt for Swedish patients** (22 Feb 08)

The woman was seen lowering the bottle into a reverse vending machine while watching the display clock up her earnings as she pulled the bottle back and forth.

Police said the woman was accompanied by her 11-year-old son, who she put to work shoplifting in the store while she, not for the first time, tried to cheat the bottle deposit system.

"This time it only came to about 100 kronor but the methods used mean we are classifying it as fraud," police spokesman Per Vikman told Expressen.

The woman was detained at Köping police station and social services were called in to take care of the boy.

TT/The Local (news@thelocal.se/08 656 6518)

- ✉ Send to a friend
- 🖨️ Printable version

Here they tape a bar code to a paint stirrer. It works much faster than a string on a bottle.

The Local © The Local Europe AB 2008
News from Sweden in English

- Newsfeeds
- Why Register?
- Contact Us
- Advertise
- FAQ