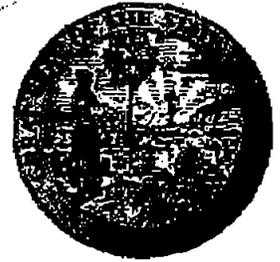




CAPE CORAL  
POLICE DEPARTMENT



STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE,  
20<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

DATE: February 28, 2004

SUBJECT: JOINT INVESTIGATION INTO  
ORGANIZED CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE

In July 2003, the Cape Coral Police Department and the State Attorney's Office, 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, began a joint investigation into an organized wide-ranging criminal enterprise operating in southwest Florida. The members of the criminal enterprise were committing identity thefts to create counterfeit credit cards, which were used for the wholesale purchase of large quantities of fuel (gasoline and diesel in the tens of thousands of gallons), which was subsequently resold. It is believed that the crime ring is responsible for losses to legitimate businesses of approximately \$20,000 per week. The monies generated by the operation were used in turn to fund other criminal enterprises, which are currently under investigation.

This morning at 5:00, officers simultaneously served search warrants at the following addresses:

Cape Coral

3214 SW 7<sup>th</sup> Place

1427 SE 10<sup>th</sup> Terrace

3622 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Place

1320 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue

1006 NW 8<sup>th</sup> Terrace

Unincorporated Lee County

6990 Rich Road

Unincorporated Collier County

6995 Everglades Boulevard

Investigators seized a variety of evidence, including nine trucks, two tractor trailers, a number of fuel storage tanks, cash, computers, boxes of fraudulent credit cards, and equipment used to manufacture counterfeit credit cards.

During the execution of the search warrants, arrest warrants were served on the nine individuals identified on the attached sheets. These offenders have been charged with over 400 counts of various racketeering offenses, as detailed in the attachments.

State Attorney Steve Russell and Cape Coral Police Chief Dan Alexander praised and thanked all of the investigators who performed so diligently and expertly on this complex investigation. They also expressed their appreciation to the following agencies that

assisted in the probe: Fort Myers Police Department, Charlotte County Sheriff's Office, Collier County Sheriff's Office, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, United States Secret Service, Office of the Inspector General - U.S. Postal Service, and Cape Coral Fire Department.

News Release