

KERN COUNTY COPPER WIRE BUST



Over the last few weeks, the Kern County Sheriff's Office Rural Crime Investigations Unit has been investigating several copper wire thefts across the county, which lead to several subjects being arrested last week. These thefts caused thousands of dollars in replacement material and repairs due to extensive damage to the victim's property. Most subjects involved in copper wire thefts will strip the wire of its insulation so that it is bare copper wire and recycle it for more money. Per California State Law, recycling centers must document the individuals name, identification number, vehicle license plate number, and use Due Diligence when obtaining where the material came from. These laws are documented in the California Business and Professions Code, starting at 21600. The recycling centers are also required to send all daily transactions to the local Sheriff's Office in their jurisdiction.

While detectives continued their investigation, they obtained evidence that there was an illegal recycling center being operated out of a residence in the 3000 block of Belle Terrace. Detectives obtained probable cause for the issuance of a search warrant at that residence.

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025, Rural Crime Detectives served the search warrant at the residence. During that investigation, detectives located several plastic bins of stripped copper wire on the property. Evidence located at the residence also showed that an illegal recycling center was being operated at the property. Overall, approximately 6,000 pounds of large gauge, commercial copper wire was located at the residence. Detectives arrested FILIMON GIL VILLAGRANA (46), of Bakersfield, TERESA GARCIA RODALES (32), of Bakersfield, and CHRISTIAN VASQUEZ HERNANDEZ (34), of Bakersfield. All three were booked at the Kern County Inmate Reception Center.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Kern County Sheriff's Office at (661)861-3110, or the Secret Witness Hotline at (661)322-4040.