

Knox County Court imposes penalty of \$1,183,000 on gas station operator

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SPRINGFIELD – The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) announced today that on January 19, 2016, a **Knox County Circuit Court** issued a **Default Judgment Order** against **TMart, Inc.**, a dissolved Wisconsin corporation, for \$1,183,000 in civil fines and penalties. The order came in response to the defendant's failure to remove abandoned underground petroleum storage tanks at a closed gasoline station, along with other violations of the Gasoline Storage Act.

"I commend the Knox County Court for holding T-Mart accountable," said **State Fire Marshal Matt Perez**. "Leaving fuel in abandoned tanks poses a great risk to public safety and our environment. This default judgement is a reminder that those who violate the Gasoline Storage Act will face repercussions."

The abandoned gasoline station is located in Wataga, Illinois and was last in operation in 2005. The corporation's employees and officers refused to remove significant amounts of fuel from both underground storage tanks at the facility. The underground fuel had the potential to cause soil and water contamination and thus posed a threat to

human health and the environment. In addition, the two underground storage tanks had been out of service for over five years and were directed to be removed. T-Mart, Inc. repeatedly failed to respond to OSFM enforcement notices directing the company to remove the storage tanks, as well as provide the required documentation for the underground storage tanks and facility. The OSFM requested that the Office of the Attorney General file a civil lawsuit against the defendant in October 2011. A lawsuit was filed and the defendant failed to file a notice of appearance. A Default Judgment Order was subsequently entered, imposing \$1,183,000 in penalties and fines against T-Mart, Inc. as the owner and operator of record. The penalties and fines were assessed for the ongoing violations of OFSM rules concerning technical and safety requirements for the operation and proper temporary closure of underground storage tanks.

A copy of the Default Judgment Order is available upon request.