

# Haine Seeks Forfeiture Of 287 Catalytic Converters Seized From Premises Of Business

by Brian Brueggemann  
October 12 2022 1:56 PM



EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County State's Attorney Thomas A. Haine announced Wednesday that his office is seeking the forfeiture of 287 catalytic converters that investigators seized from the premises of a scrap-metal dealer in East Alton.



Haine filed a forfeiture case that alleges proper records were not kept when the catalytic converters were purchased. The forfeiture case alleges that an undercover investigator from the Illinois Secretary of State, acting on information from Wood River Police, sold three catalytic converters to an employee of the business, Summit Processors, on Sept. 26.

The employee of the business failed to require proof of ownership for the parts, failed to photograph the sellers, and paid cash for the parts, according to an affidavit from the investigator. A check is required when the purchase exceeds \$100.

Haine's office then assisted the Secretary of State Police investigator in obtaining a warrant to search the premises, resulting in the discovery of the additional catalytic

converters. It was determined that none of the catalytic converters were purchased in accordance with state statutes, according to the investigator's affidavit.

"The Wood River Police Department, which initiated this investigation, and the Illinois Secretary of State Police are to be commended for their excellent work here," Haine said. "The theft of catalytic converters is a plague on our region and our state. This forfeiture action is part of a continued effort by my office and by police to dry up the sources of revenue for such thieves. We will continue to crack down on the demand for such parts by working to ensure the sales of often-stolen vehicle parts like catalytic converters are conducted in accordance with Illinois statutes."

Wood River Police Chief Brad Wells said, "This case began with an alert Patrol Officer who developed information leading to the further investigation. I appreciate the work by all involved in bringing this case together. I appreciate the efforts of the Wood River Police Officer and Detectives, the Illinois Secretary of State, and the Madison County State's Attorney's Office."

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White said, "I am proud of the Secretary of State Police for their excellent work on this case. This is an outstanding example of law enforcement jurisdictions working together to produce positive results in an effort to combat the theft of catalytic converters."

Secretary of State Police issued two Class A misdemeanor charges against an employee of the business, 42-year-old John T. Freely II of Belleville. The state law covering the sale of scrap vehicle parts – the Recyclable Metal Purchase Registration Law – allows a felony to be charged only for a second offense. The charges allege that Freely purchased the catalytic converters on Sept. 26 without obtaining the required documentation.

Freely's first court appearance is scheduled for Oct. 26. The cost for replacing a catalytic converter can reach \$3,000 for a car owner, depending on the vehicle. Illinois, in an effort to reduce thefts of catalytic converters, has required the buyers of automotive parts or scrap metals to keep certain records when purchasing the parts.

*This charge, as well as the statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.*