

Area law enforcement works case: Man sentenced to 31 months in prison for conspiracy to commit wire fraud

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Shu K. Chen, 38, from the People's Republic of China, was sentenced to 31 months in prison for his convictions for Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud and Aggravated Identity Theft, Stephen R. Wigginton, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today. Chen was also ordered to serve three years supervised release and pay restitution totaling \$22,137.40 to nineteen area financial institutions.

Chen was originally arrested by the Collinsville Police Department on December 12, 2014, at the Walmart store in Collinsville, Illinois, for using counterfeit credit cards to fraudulently purchase gift cards. Further investigation revealed that Chen had also used counterfeit credit cards the day before at the same Walmart and that he was traveling around the area with another individual. Chen had used counterfeit credit cards to make purchases at least twenty-six retail locations in this area and in Missouri. The credit cards were encoded on the magnetic strip with legitimate credit card account numbers of area residents who were victimized. Chen provided a false New Jersey driver's license at the time of the arrest in the name of Chang Zhang, which was the name embossed on the front of the counterfeit credit cards.

The successful prosecution is the result of an investigation conducted by the Secret Service, the Internal Revenue Service/Criminal Investigation, and the Collinsville Police Department with the assistance of other local police departments and the Madison County State's Attorney's Office. The prosecution of the case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Norman R. Smith.