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Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force



2008 Legislative Report

As required by MN §299A.681 Financial Crimes Oversight Council and Task Force

BACKGROUND

In 2000, the Minnesota State Legislature established the Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force (MNFCTF) as a statewide law enforcement agency. The MNFCTF was established in response to retailers, bankers other businesses and law enforcement to combat cross-jurisdictional financial crime activity. The MNFCTF, under MN State Statute Sect 299A.681, was provided authority to investigate cross-municipal/county boundaries in investigating organized criminal groups committing identity theft and financial crimes. The State statute also established an Oversight Council, of up to eighteen (18) members, to develop an overall strategy to ameliorate the harm caused to the public by these crimes. Council members have included representatives from: law enforcement agencies, Department of Public Safety, financial institutions, the retail industry, a senior citizens group, the Public Defender Office, Federal law enforcement and the County Attorney. The strategy of the MNFCTF includes the development to statewide protocols, procedures, and structures that best address these issues in a multi-jurisdictional manner.

LEGISLATION/BUDGET

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 the Minnesota State Legislature provided a budget of \$750,000 to support the operation and development of this statewide task force strategy. However, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009 the funding was reduced to \$300,000. The MNFCTF was able to adapt to this funding cut in several ways including: carryover funds from a one-time award from the Minnesota United States Attorney's Office; an Auto Theft grant; the MNFCTF forfeiture funds. The funding reduction also required the MNFCTF to reduce it's spending in several areas including: reimbursement rates to participating agencies; communications costs, overtime costs, elimination of MNFCTF business manager position, as well as many other smaller costs.

Despite these cost cutting measures the MNFCTF was able to maintain a staff of eight investigators, two analysts and the commander's position. Three of the investigators work cases within the Greater Twin Cities Metropolitan Area with the Minneapolis Police Department, Edina Police Department and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension each providing an investigator.

A one-time supplemental funding from the Minnesota State Legislature in 2007 allowed the MNFCTF to expand its operations statewide. The MNFCTF continues to provide coverage for the investigation of financial crimes through four regions as follows: Southern Region (Wright County Sheriff's Office investigator); Central Region (Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Office investigator); Northwestern Region (Baxter Police Department investigator) and the Northern Region (Duluth Police Department two half-time investigators).

In 2007 the MNFCTF was awarded a two-year Auto Theft Grant with the St. Paul Police Department providing an investigator. This funding allows the investigation of

automobile theft that involves financial crime. Investigations generally involve criminals who have defrauded automobile dealers, financial institutions and citizens through the "fraudulent purchase or leasing or renting of vehicles". These investigations continue to be of great concern due to the rapid growth of identity theft crimes and the creative means criminals are employing to commit financial crimes to steal automobiles from private owners and businesses.

2008 CHALLENGES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

In January 2008 the Office of the State Auditor issued a report of their audit findings based on the request of the MNFCTF. The Auditors report covered six areas: review minutes of the MNFCTF meetings and relevant documented policies, reports, and agreements; identify and evaluate the policies and practices related to seized property, the evidence room and forfeitures; identify and evaluate the policies and practices related to buy funds; identify and evaluate the policies and practices for tracking, matching, and accounting for personnel costs; identify and evaluate the policies and practices for procurement or reimbursement of costs; identify and evaluate the responsibilities and conflicts based on the relationships between the MNFCTF, RPA, Anoka County (fiscal agent), and the DPS. The Auditor's report outlined minor recommendations and had only one item of note, an apparent conflict of interest with the Business Director of Retailer's Protection Association (RPA) under Item 11 of the MNFCTF's bylaws. That finding is no longer a concern as RPA's contract with the MNFCTF was terminated on June 30, 2008.

NEW COMMANDER

Commander Chris Omodt from the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office received a promotion to Captain and returned to his home agency. Patrick Henry, from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, was nominated by DPS Commissioner Michael Campion at the MNFCTF Oversight Council's 2nd Quarter Meeting. The Council approved the nomination and Commander Henry assumed his duties effective July 1, 2008.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS (FLEA)

The MNFCTF has been successful in 2008 in re-establishing working partnerships with its FLEA partners. The IRS Criminal Investigation Division (CID) has committed 4 Special Agents to the MNFCTF for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. In addition, two agents in Rochester, MN and two agents in Duluth, MN will work under the auspices of the MNFCTF. The United States Secret Service has also committed to staffing a full time agent within the task force. The United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) continues to provide agents to the task force for cases involving postal related offenses. In December the MNFCTF and the FBI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

which will assign a task force investigator to the FBI's Mortgage Fraud Task Force (MFTF). The MNBCA provided the investigator to the task force at no cost to fill this position.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The MNFCTF internship program was able to offer internships to students from Brown College, St. Cloud State University (2) and Winona State University. This program provides "hands on" experience by assisting task force investigators prepare cases for prosecution. The services are provided at no cost/low-cost, which helps cover the funding shortfall.

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION (RNC)

During the six months preceding the RNC all the metro task force investigators participated in weekly training sessions in preparation for the event. During the RNC those investigators participated exclusively in RNC events.

CASE DIVERSITY

During 2008 the MNFCTF made a concerted effort to investigate a broader range of financial crimes, especially those crimes attributed to organized criminal enterprises. A sampling of the types of cases worked by the task force include: identity theft, bank fraud, check forgery and counterfeit checks; mortgage fraud; vulnerable adult related crimes including embezzlement and theft by swindle and Ponzi schemes.

INVESTIGATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The MNFCTF fosters partnerships between law enforcement agencies when a criminal or organized criminal group has committed crimes across multi-jurisdictional lines and several agencies have a crime or crimes committed in their particular city or county. Our purpose is to streamline the investigative process by centralizing and sharing information and reducing duplication of effort.

Calendar Year 2008 Statistics

2008 Stats	Qtr 1 (1/1/08 - 3/31/08)	Qtr 2 (4/1/08 - 6/30/08)	Qtr 3 (7/1/08 - 9/30/08)	Qtr 4 (10/1/08 - 12/31/08)	2008 TOTALS
Individuals Charged	88	60	29	30	207
Counts Charged	362	118*	45*	46*	571
Search Warrants	23	18	8	11	60
Arrests	11	8	5	15	39
Federal Indictments	0	2	2	2	6
Recovered Vehicles	0	1	0	0	1
Recovered Narcotics	2	0	0	0	2
Recovered Firearms	1	0	1	0	2
Recovered Computers	3	1	6	3	13
Forensic Exams	0	0	0	0	0
Presentations Given	5	3	0	0	8
Intelligence Meetings	7	0	0	0	7
Auto Theft Cases	0	1	7	1	9

* Counts Charged number based on number of counts listed in complaint

Number of Counts Charged By County

Charges By County	Qtr 1 (1/1/08 - 3/31/08)	Qtr 2 (4/1/08 - 6/30/08)	Qtr 3 (7/1/08 - 9/30/08)	Qtr 4 (10/1/08 - 12/31/08)	2008 TOTALS
Anoka	13	6	0	0	19
Dakota	0	1	1	0	2
Federal Court	0	6	2	2	10
Hennepin	122	63	25	41	251
Morrison	8	0	0	0	8
Ramsey	67	1	2	2	72
Sherburne	0	26	0	0	26
St. Louis	19	20	12	2	53
Stearns	118	0	2	0	120
Wright	17	0	3	1	21
Washington	0	1	0	0	1
Total	364	124	47	48	583

TYPES OF MNFCTF CASES CHARGED

- Check Forgery
- Identity Theft
- Counterfeit Checks (Personal, Business, and Government)
- Financial Transaction Card Fraud
- Mail Theft & Mail Fraud
- Loan & Credit Application Fraud
- Issue Dishonored Checks
- Mortgage Fraud
- Motor Vehicle Theft
- Possession of Stolen Property
- Possession or Sale of Stolen or Counterfeit Checks
- Possession or Sale of Financial Transaction Cards
- Theft by Swindle
- Theft from a Motor Vehicle

2009 GOALS

The MNFCF Oversight Council has set the following goals for 2009:

1. Provide legislative solutions for the State Legislature specifically in the area of permanent funding streams for the MNFCTF. This will insure current and long term viability in the statewide financial crimes investigative effort.
2. Enhance and upgrade MNFCTF's technology with special emphasis on developing a case management system along with updated work stations to maintain an efficient work flow.
3. Provide law enforcement agencies and county prosecutors with training on financial crime investigations. Focusing on investigation and case presentation of multi-jurisdictional cases and organized criminal enterprises.
4. Finalize the new MOU agreements with all agencies participating on the task force. The Oversight Council will update the current MOU's and will resign MOU/s with all participating agencies on or before July 1, 2009.
5. Develop its own computer forensic examination component with assistance from the United States Secret Service and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
6. Develop a long-term strategy for funding levels for task force investigators based on future funding availability. This will include working with the Chief's and Sheriff's Association, BCA and business community in accomplishing the mission of the task force in consideration of limited funding and resources.

MINNESOTA FINANCIAL CRIMES TASK FORCE 2008 CASE **SUMMARIES**

The following are selected summaries of task force investigations. These summaries are not meant to be a complete list of the task force's investigations during 2008. Rather these are only examples as to the types of investigations and types of illegal activities being investigated by the MNFCTF.

Please note: If suspect's charges are pending, only their initials are used.

January 2008

On **January 7, 2008**, the MNFCTF received a report regarding stolen credit card information being used to make online purchases from Overstock.com. According to the victim, a number of items had been purchased illegally using her U.S. Bank credit card. The MNFCTF Investigator further learned from the victim that her identity was stolen a number of years prior while on vacation with her family in Mexico. A copy of the police report was forwarded to the local police department in Indiana where the items were to be shipped. Most likely scenario was that her information was sold on the Internet. The items were not shipped. (MNFCTF 08-000646)

On **January 8, 2008**, the MNFCTF received a report regarding an identity theft/financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult. The report indicated that the female complainant caring for her elderly father learned that the prior caregiver, her brother, had opened credit card accounts in the victim's name, as well as a possible second mortgage. After speaking with the daughter/complainant, the Investigator learned that her family is very scared of the brother/suspect since he is a veteran with PTSD. They are fearful of him and had not yet confronted him on the allegations. The Investigator advised her that since her brother did have power of attorney at the time it might be possible that this is a civil issue but that she and her family needed to confront the brother on the issue. This case is still ongoing. (MNFCTF 08-000198)

On **January 11, 2008**, FLOYACE GREEN, aka FLOYACE GARRETT, DOB 10/4/51, was charged with two counts of Offering a Forged Check. Victims Building Materials Inc. and Waterford Apartments Corp, GREEN passed a total loss of about \$3000. (MNFCTF 07-000621)

On **January 19, 2008**, the MNFCTF received a report regarding another mystery shopper scam. The complainant originally reported that she received these materials and then cashed one of the checks she received. The money was wired off. The following day, the complainant received a phone call from her bank explaining that the check was counterfeit. The complainant went to the Wal-Mart where she had wired off the money and was able to have the money re-called. The money was luckily returned and she repaid the bank. (MNFCTF 08-000199)

Between **January 11, 2008 and January 29, 2008**, financial accounts were opened in the name of N.G. These accounts were opened through US Bank Corp and City County Financial Credit Union. The financial cards and account information were mailed to a home in north Minneapolis, MN. After a controlled mail delivery of financial cards, a search warrant was executed on the home. I.L.M was arrested from the home during the execution of the search warrant. I.L.M. was in possession/control of a firearm, which he is restricted from based on his past felony convictions. I.L.M. was charged for the firearms violation through the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. The investigation of the accounts in N.G.'s name is on going. (MNFCTF 08-000350)

MNFCTF Case #08-000350 – Recovered Firearm



On **January 24, 2008**, the MNFCTF received information regarding illegal credit card and counterfeit check activity from the Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Office. The victim reported that someone had been to the Eden Prairie Scheels Store the previous night and had purchased items with a counterfeit check in her name and that the suspects had purchased TV's at the Sears store in the Mall of America. The case continued throughout the week generating several leads where numerous counterfeit checks had been uttered in several Twin Cities area retail stores. At every location the suspect also applied for in-store credit. A break in the case occurred when the Investigator received a call from Eagan Police Department when it was learned that they had made an arrest of a female suspect while executing a search warrant in Inver Grove Heights on 1/31/08. The suspect is B.L.N. She matched the suspect that had been seen on collected surveillance video. B.L.N. is being charged in Dakota County. (MNFCTF 08-000196)

In **January 2008**, the MNFCTF took over an investigation from the Minneapolis/St.Paul Airport Police regarding rental cars being obtained fraudulently. Q.V.F. rented 3 cars over a 3 month time period by means of a false identity and stolen credit cards. T.M.H. rented 4 cars over a 3 month time period by means of stolen credit cards. Criminal charges are pending against Q.V.F. for Identity Theft and Financial Transaction Card Fraud. Criminal charges are pending against T.M.H. for Financial Transaction Card Fraud. (MNFCTF 07-002484, 08-000080, 08-000081, 08-000082, 08-000149, 08-000150, 08-000151 - AUTO THEFT CASE)

Between **January 30, 2008 and February 1, 2008**, suspect M.V.W. cashed, or attempted to cash, forged checks totaling \$4105.00 at US Bank locations in Hennepin County. On February 1, 2008 M.V.W. was arrested as she was attempting to cash a forged check at the US Bank near 50th Street and France Ave South, Edina-MN. M.V.W. confessed/admitted to all of the forged checks that she cashed at US Bank locations as well as additional forged checks that she cashed at TCF Bank Locations. Felony charges for Offering a Forged Check(s) have been submitted to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. (MNFCTF 08-000273, 08-000307, 08-000438)

February 2008

On **February 5, 2008**, Marvella Mae Baker, DOB 8/11/73, was charged with one count of Possession of Stolen or Counterfeit Check and Offering a Forged Check. Baker was cashing counterfeit checks drawn on the Fourth Judicial District Court for about \$1,200. (MNFCTF 08-000263)

On **February 8, 2008**, the MNFCTF received a report regarding an elderly female who had applied for health insurance via an informational fax that she received at her employer's office. The woman called and gave all of her information and her husband's information, including SSN's and all bank information. She was told that she would be billed monthly and that she would soon be receiving all of the information in the mail. After about a month and a half she had not received any information in the mail and while she was reviewing her bank statement, she saw that a company listed on the statement as NABSA had made a withdrawal from her account in the amount of \$324.00. She promptly contacted her bank and was told to make a report to law enforcement. In speaking with her, the MNFCTF learned that the company she originally thought she was calling was United Health but in fact she had given all of her and her husband's information to a different company. In doing an Internet search of the company, the Investigator found that it is a bogus company and that it was just a scam. The Investigator then advised the complainant to never give out any information over the telephone and that insurance applications are always done through the mail. (MNFCTF 08-000432)

On **February 11, 2008**, the MNFCTF received a report regarding a possible mortgage fraud that had occurred in Isanti County. The complainant reported that he received mortgage foreclosure papers in the mail from Isanti County. The complainant had never lived in Isanti County and never owned any property there. Further checking indicated that the complainant's name did appear on the paperwork and that it may be connected to another MNFCTF case. Later in the week, the complainant called back after making contact with the foreclosure attorney. She had learned that the person the paperwork was supposed to go to was accidentally sent to her by the county after the county could not make contact with the correct person. The county had apparently Googled the name on the Internet and got the complainant's information. The correct person had recently gotten married and both actually had the same name. No further action was taken. (MNFCTF 08-000333)

On **February 22, 2008**, Tamara Nicole Caples, DOB 5/16/84, was charged with Offering a Forged Check. Caples opened an account at Wells Fargo with a \$2,385 check from Excalibur Group. Caples passed another check from Excalibur in Wisconsin a few days prior to her arrest. **(MNFCTF 08-000124)**

On **February 28, 2008**, the MNFCTF received a report regarding another Nigerian scam. The complainant explained that they had received a check in the mail. The check appeared suspicious to the complainant and she turned it over to the Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Office. After some checking, it was determined that the routing number on the check was fictitious and the check was counterfeit. **(MNFCTF 08-000466)**

On **February 28, 2008**, the MNFCTF received information from the Woodlands National Bank of Onamia regarding a counterfeit \$50.00 bill, which had been passed at the BP Station in Onamia, MN on 2/27/08. No suspect could be identified at that time, but the following day the suspect attempted to utter another counterfeit \$50.00 bill at the Gateway Café in Onamia, MN. Another bill was discovered later that same day at the SuperValu in Onamia, MN. A suspect was initially developed but later photographs showed it to not be him. Information was exchanged between the MNFCTF and Spring Lake Park police since the same counterfeit bill had been passed in their city. On March 6, 2008, an Investigator met with Aitkin Police Officer Tim Catlin and they developed enough information to obtain a search warrant for the residence of M.G. In executing the search warrant, a counterfeiting operation was found along with stolen computers taken during the burglary of the Cemstone concrete plant in Isle, MN. Two suspects were arrested that night and a third was later arrested in Coon Rapids, MN. Charges were filed in Aitkin County and included felony escape from custody, counterfeiting U.S. currency, possession of counterfeit currency, uttering counterfeit currency and possession of stolen property. Charges in Mille Lacs County include third degree burglary and uttering counterfeit currency. **(MNFCTF 08-000449)**

On **February 28, 2008**, Sherome Tobo Rice, DOB 11/1/72, was charged with Possession of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Victims JT Kitt Society and IC Systems. Rice passed several checks on the two accounts totaling \$1700. **(MNFCTF 07-002114)**

On **February 29, 2008**, the Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Office took a report of a burglary at the Cemstone concrete plant. In the burglary, three computers were taken along with a company truck. The truck was later recovered in Aitkin County. This case ties in with MNFCTF case number **08-000449**. The truck was recovered minus its wheels. Two of the computers, and the truck, were recovered in a search warrant executed in Malmo, MN in located Aitkin County. **(MNFCTF 08-000449 AUTO THEFT)**

In **February 2008**, nine (9) felony level cases were presented to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office for prosecution. Wells Fargo Bank was victim to counterfeit check fraud as a result of the following individuals. P.A.M. issued approximately \$12,954, A.M.N. issued approximately \$28,921, and D.J.P. issued approximately \$9,500.

Criminal charges are being filed for Possession of Counterfeit Checks and Forgery.
(MNFCTF 07-001378 AUTO THEFT)

In **February 2008**, Gordon Christopher Folke, DOB 11/17/62, was charged with Theft By Swindle over \$35,000 and Financial Transaction Card Fraud. While employed at Solar Plastics as a chief financial officer, Folke issued checks to fake vendors, cashed the checks and then deposited the checks into his own account. On two occasions, Folke also fraudulently used a Solar Plastics company credit card to make payments towards his family's vacation to Walt Disney World. Folke is suspected of embezzling in excess of \$51,000. **(MNFCTF 08-000072)**

March 2008

On **March 7, 2008**, Devitta Antoinette Thurmond, DOB 2/28/75, was charged with Possession of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Thurmond received four counterfeit US Postal Money Orders for \$820 each in the mail from someone she had corresponded with in the United Kingdom. **(MNFCTF 08-000207)**

On **March 10, 2008**, the MNFCTF received another report of a mystery shopper scam. In speaking with the complainant, the Investigator learned that she was trying to find a job on the Internet when she applied to become a mystery shopper. The Investigator explained that this was a scam and that the check she received was counterfeit check. **(MNFCTF 08-000648)**

On **March 12, 2008**, Steven Donald Clemens, DOB 7/6/84, was charged with Possession of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Clemens received a check for \$7,500 for his vehicle he was selling on Craig's list for \$5,000. The person sending him the check advised him to keep \$1,000 for a check-cashing fee. **(MNFCTF 08-000141)**

On **March 13, 2008**, Angela Leigh Roder, DOB 8/25/69 and Thomas Walter Crews, DOB 7/14/70, were charged with Offering Forged Checks. Wells Fargo Bank was victim to counterfeit check fraud as a result of the following individuals. Roder issued approximately \$40,733 and Crews issued approximately \$16,660. **(MNFCTF 07-000954, 07-001166, 07-001167, 07-001312, 07-001313 AUTO THEFT)**

On **March 13, 2008**, the MNFCTF received a report of a counterfeited check that had been drawn on the account of the Mille Lacs Serviceman's Association. The check had been cashed at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs by suspect A.A.A. A.A.A. was also wanted in connection to purchasing cars with counterfeited check and money orders in Duluth, MN and Orono, MN. The Investigator later learned the following week that a car which had been purchased by A.A.A. in Duluth, MN was recovered abandoned in Mille Lacs County about three miles from a known associate of A.A.A. The trunk of the vehicle was later searched and found evidence of counterfeited checks, money orders and cashiers checks. The Investigator observed several pay stubs belonging to A.A.A., as well as his W-2's from 2006. The Investigator also took possession of A.A.A.'s Minnesota DL and SS card which had been discovered by the two companies. A.A.A.

was arrested a few days later in Pine County. Charged are pending against him in Mille Lacs County for Possession of Counterfeit Checks and Uttering Counterfeited Checks. A.A.A. was also wanted in Kanabec County for an armed robbery. (MNFCTF 08-000538)

On **March 20, 2008** P.A.G. was arrested for offering a forged check. Multiple Minnesota Driver's Licenses and forged/counterfeit checks were found in P.A.G.'s possession at the time of her arrest. The forged/counterfeit checks were in the names of real persons as well as businesses. This case is an on-going investigation. (MNFCTF 08-000582)

In **March 2008**, Katie Raye Vanravenhorst, DOB 9/1/84; Markitta Lanna Owens, DOB 4/29/83; Vivian Diane Walker, DOB 8/29/88; Bobby Rydell Williams, DOB 4/17/66 and Pia Denneen Christianson, DOB 6/21/64 were all charged with Check Forgery and Offering a Forged check in Wright County. Victims Fourth Dimension CNC Machining and Stone and Brick Inc. (MNFCTF 07-001961 & 07-001966)

In **March 2008**, William Otis Bausal, DOB 1/28/61; Yahzerah Brazelton, DOB 8/16/73; Demethrice Marquest Brown, DOB 12/12/83; Michelle Lynn Ringold, DOB 9/22/82; Eddie Robinson Jr, DOB 3/30/87; Oscar Woods Jr, DOB 1/27/65; Danielle Claudia Pierce, DOB 1/27/69 and Gilda Edna McCoy, DOB 6/18/70 were all charged with Possession of Stolen or Counterfeit checks and Conspiracy to offer a forged check. (MNFCTF 07-001806)

In **March 2008**, the MNFCTF was contacted to assist Glenwood Police Department investigate a financial fraud case. Minnewaska Ford of Glenwood Minnesota is suspected of submitting false "floor plan" loan requests to Bremer Bank of Alexandria Minnesota, for an estimate financial loss of \$2 million dollars. (MNFCTF 08-000733)

April 2008

On **April 1, 2008**, Jesse Nicole Jones, DOB 8/27/87, was arrested at UnBank in Minneapolis, MN for attempting to cash a counterfeit check from Albers Mechanicals Contractors. Jones claims she got the check from an individual name "Pooke". Jones was charged with Felony Offering a Forged check. (MNFCTF 08-000616)

On **April 3, 2008**, Minnie Lee Loyd, DOB 6/30/56, was charged with Offering a Forged Check. Loyd attempted to cash a counterfeit check from the Pearson's Florist account at the UnBank in Minneapolis, MN. (MNFCTF 07-002557)

On **April 8, 2008**, Sandra Marie Roski, DOB 7/20/64, was charged with Offering a Forged Check. Roski entered the Target store in Nicollet Mall and attempted to buy merchandise with a counterfeit Visa Travelers Check. (MNFCTF 08-000467)

On **April 15, 2008**, a report of identity theft was received from the Isanti Police Department. The victim learned from the IRS that his identity was being used by possibly two other individuals working in the Twin Cities area. All indications are that the suspects are illegal aliens. This investigation is still on-going. (MNFCTF 08-000796)

On **April 21, 2008**, a search warrant was executed on several computers and storage devices recovered from a search warrant in Minneapolis, MN. The computers belonged to P.G. who is a suspect in providing fake IDs and counterfeit checks. A partial image of the computer so far has revealed 100 drivers licenses and counterfeit checks. This case is still under investigation. (MNFCTF 08-000618)

On **April 24, 2008**, a report of identity theft and medical fraud was received from Mille Lacs County. The victim explained her sister, whom is a known drug user, has somehow stolen her medical card and was "doctor shopping" for prescriptions for narcotics. A crime alert was issued, but there have been no leads. The last known drug store was contacted, but no video was available. This case has been closed. (MNFCTF 08-000754)

On **April 28, 2008**, Kimberly Alyssa Lowe, DOB 10/31/73, was charged with Possession of a Counterfeit Check and Offering a Forged Check. Lowe passed a forged check on the checking account of Portage Marketing. (MNFCTF 07-002718)

On **April 30, 2008**, Gail Janine New, DOB 2/27/65, was charged in Ramsey County with Theft by Swindle. New opened a checking account with US Bank and fraudulent checks were subsequently deposited into the account. (MNFCTF 07-001803, 07-001805)

May 2008

The MNFCTF is currently investigating a large scale counterfeit check ring involving Bremer, US Bank, Wells Fargo and TCF banks. The case involves Bremer Business Account checks being counterfeited and deposited into several banks throughout the Metro area. This investigation is on-going. (MNFCTF 08-000767)

Between the dates of **September 2006** and **May 2008**, R.H. made fraudulent transfers from her vehicle loan account totaling \$280,000. In March of 2005, R.H. obtained a \$12,000 vehicle loan through a local bank. R.H. told police she thought she had obtained an "Open Ended" loan account. This case has been submitted to Hennepin County Attorney's Office for Felony Theft by Swindle charges. (MNFCTF 08-000803)

On **May 1, 2008**, Merrie Buff Johnson, DOB 1/14/58, was charged with a total of 16 counts of Theft by False Representation by Check and Theft by Swindle. Since 2003, Johnson has opened a series of 15 different business checking accounts as part of a continuing scheme to swindle a variety of companies and individuals. During the course

of this scheme, Johnson has written at least 1,141 bad checks which defrauded various companies and individuals of slightly over \$423,000. (MNFCTF 06-003233, 06-003901)

On **May 6, 2008**, a report was received from Mille Lacs County regarding credit card fraud. The victim is from Blaine, MN, and reported that a resident in Milaca, MN, was using the credit card illegally. M.J.K. was interviewed and admitted to using the credit card after he received it. M.J.K. was instructed to use the card in order to receive the remainder of his inheritance. M.J.K. withdrew and wired \$3,000 to New York, NY. M.J.K. purchased 4 laptop type computers and shipped them to Ireland and also purchased a vehicle for himself. This case is pending. The Washington County Sheriff's Office is also working a case with the same victim. The main suspects in this case are from overseas. (MNFCTF 08-001064)

A search warrant was executed on **May 6, 2008**, in Fridley, MN. The search warrant was to assist Grapevine Texas Police Department who had a burglary involving 15,000 stolen Tom-Tom GPS units. J.L. sold one of the stolen Tom-Toms to a person in Washington State over the internet. A computer, paperwork, business checks and receipts were recovered which led to other GPS units being recovered in Round Rock, TX. The case is still being investigated. (MNFCTF 08-000761)

On **May 8, 2008**, Eddie Markeith Frazier, DOB 12/23/67, was charged with Identity Theft. Frazier used another person's ID to cash a counterfeit check on Hiawatha Restaurants Inc business account. (MNFCTF 06-003721)

On **May 8, 2008**, Gerald Lynn Galbreath, DOB 10/18/57, was charged with Possession of Stolen or Counterfeit Checks. Galbreath attempted to cash a counterfeit check drawn on the account of the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office. (MNFCTF 08-000609)

On **May 15, 2008**, Katrina Marie Carroll, DOB 5/2/71, was charged with Offering a Forged Check and Possession of a Stolen Check. Carroll cashed a counterfeit check at Coborn's store in Big Lake, MN. (MNFCTF 07-001961, 07-001966)

On **May 15, 2008**, Tra Alix Pryor, DOB 3/29/75, was charged with Offering a Forged Check and Possession of a Stolen Check. Pryor cashed a counterfeit check at Coborn's in Big Lake, MN. (MNFCTF 07-001961, 07-001966)

On **May 15, 2008**, Angela Marie Norling, DOB 6/14/82, was charged with Possession of Counterfeit Checks and Forgery. Norling issued approximately \$28,921 worth of checks at Wells Fargo banks in Hennepin County. (MNFCTF 07-1167)

On **May 16, 2008**, the suspect, K.G. was arrested and admitted to forging checks. Between the dates of 2/11/2008 and 2/20/2008 K.G. forged nine checks from the victim's account. This case has been submitted to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office for Felony Check Forgery charges. (MNFCTF 08-000610)

On **May 27, 2008**, a report was received from Mille Lacs County in regards to a stolen debit card being used at a strip club in Bock, MN. M.R. reported his wallet stolen to the Kanabec County Sheriff's Office on 4/24/2008. According to M.R. the suspect(s) used his debit card to make charges and ATM withdrawals at a strip club. Signature receipts from the strip club show the signatures are very similar to those of M.R. M.R. claimed he has been working in the area during the time his wallet was stolen. No video was available and no one at the strip club recognized the photo of M.R. It is suspected that M.R. made the charges himself and lied to his spouse about the charges claiming his wallet was stolen. The location of M.R. is unknown and he has not returned phone calls or responded to letters sent. This case is still pending. (MNFCTF 08-000911)

May – June 2008. A stolen check cashing ring involving 5 – 6 Hispanic males is being investigated. Businesses in Wright, Hennepin and Anoka counties have been burglarized resulting in business checks being stolen. Preliminary information gathered shows approximately \$40,000 - \$50,000 worth of stolen checks being cashed. (MNFCTF 08-001062)

June 2008

June 2008. Quincy Valentino Forrest, DOB 11/2/81, and Trenceca Marie Hoskins, DOB 2/10/79, were charged with Identity Theft and Financial Transaction Card Fraud. Forrest and Hoskins used the identities and credit cards of others to secure and rent vehicles from car rental agencies at the Minneapolis Airport. (MNFCTF 07-002484, 08-000080, 08-000081, 08-000082, 08-000149, 08-000150, 08-000151 – Auto Theft Case)

On **June 2, 2008**, Theodore Francis Haviland, DOB 10/4/64, was charged with Check Forgery. Between the dates of October 2007 and March 2008, Haviland forged/deposited approximately \$12,000 worth of the victim's checks. He also applied for, and was granted, a vehicle loan to purchase a \$12,000 Volvo. He was arrested in May 2008 for a probation violation and his incarceration was extended pending the litigation of this case file. (MNFCTF 08-000645)

On **June 2, 2008**, the MNFCTF responded to an identity theft in progress at the Guaranty Bank located in the city of Columbia Heights, MN. Robert Demetrius Johnson, DOB 10/20/72, was arrested and subsequently charged with Identity Theft in Anoka County. The investigation revealed several suspects and a connection between the suspects in Minnesota and an estimated \$800,000 stolen check case in Boston, Massachusetts. The case also involves a similar case in Toledo, Ohio, where the arrested suspect had conducted a similar transaction at a bank. This case is being investigated by the MNFCTF, United States Postal Service, Secret Service, Boston PD and the Wayzata PD. (MNFCTF 08-000909)

June 19, 2008 – An investigator is assisting with a theft investigation of a vulnerable adult in Isle, MN. The victim believes that his part-time cleaning lady is stealing money and tools from his apartment. The total loss at this point is in excess of

\$3,000 in cash and tools. The suspect, J.J.B, cleans weekly for the victim. At one point there was a plan in place to use marked money to set up the suspect in a sting operation. The operation was called off by the victim hours before being put into action because he felt sorry for her due to her current situation. The following day the victim called and reported that she had stolen from him again. The case is still under investigation and currently waiting for the opportunity to put the plan back in place. The suspect's status may be changing at this point because of her intentions to move. (MNFCTF 08-001065)

July 2008

On **July 1, 2008**, Colby James Golyer, DOB 8/1/78, was charged with Felony Offering a Forged check. Golyer presented and passed a counterfeit check at Coborn's in Ramsey, MN. Golyer is believed to be a part of a group that targeted Coborn's stores for \$48,000 in bad checks. (MNFCTF 07-001963)

On **July 3, 2008**, Floyce Ann Garret, DOB 10/4/51, was charged with Felony Possession or Sale of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Garret presented checks on the victim's corporate account.

On **July 3, 2008**, Joshua Edward Blanton, DOB 10/26/86, was charged with Felony Possession of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Blanton presented a check for \$8.950 at a financial institution in Minneapolis, MN. Blanton received the check by UPS and admitted to knowing people who counterfeit checks and believes that this is who he received the check from. (MNFCTF 08-000879)

On **July 3, 2008**, A.P.G. entered a Hopkins, MN, office building and stole the wallets of 3 female victims. The suspect then used credit cards from the victim's wallets along with two female accomplices. All three suspects have been identified and the case will be submitted to the Hennepin County Attorney's office for possible charges of Felony Financial Transaction Card Fraud. (MNFCTF 08-001072, 08-001073, 08-001074)

On **July 8, 2008**, a complaint was made from Kanabec County Family Services regarding an exploitation of a vulnerable adult. The victim lives in an assisted living facility in Mora, MN. The victim's sister is the legal guardian. It is suspected that the victim's sister is taking the victim's disbursement check and keeping it. The victim's bills have not been paid in nearly two years. A search warrant was executed on both the victim and suspect's bank accounts and it was discovered that the victim is spending all her money at the casino. The victim is not competent to pay her bills and the responsibility is the legal guardians. This case is being forwarded to Mille Lacs County for possible charges. (MNFCTF 08-001002)

On **July 14, 2008**, Theresa Ann Reed, DOB 6/30/67, was charged with Felony Check Forgery-Offer/Possess w/Intent to Defraud. Reed presented and received cash for

the counterfeit check at Coborn's. Reed used a false name and identification when presenting this check. (MNFCTF 07-001965)

On **July 14, 2008**, Rhonda Kaye Seraaj, DOB 12/23/65 and Deric Martin Hirocho, DOB 6/21/73, were both charged with Felony Check Forgery. Serraj and Hirocho offered counterfeit checks at Coborn's and received cash for the counterfeit checks. (MNFCTF 07-001965)

On **July 22, 2008**, a search warrant was executed in Minnetonka, MN. Two people were arrested for Felony Theft by Swindle. A stolen computer, printer and equipment purchased with a counterfeit check were recovered. (MNFCTF 08-001092)

A report was received on **July 25, 2008**, regarding an identity theft. Someone had previously stolen the victim's mail in which there was an application to a health insurance company. The victim's information was used in Florida to obtain numerous credit cards. Numerous purchases were made online and in Florida. It would seem that her information was sold online. (MNFCTF 08-001101)

August 2008

Between **May** and **August 2008**, a ring of suspects stole the identities of US Bank customers and withdrew more than \$100,000. Four suspects have positively been identified, two of which have been arrested. This investigation is on-going. (MNFCTF 08-000536, 08-000737, 08-000977, 08-001010, 08-001011, 08-001012, 08-001117, 08-001118, 08-001119, 08-001125, 08-001126, 08-001127, 08-001135, 08-001136, 08-001148, and 08-001150)

Alvin Bernell Moore, DOB 10/4/64 was charged with Felony Identity Theft and Felony Theft by Swindle over \$1,000 on **August 5, 2008**. Moore used a counterfeit driver's license, yellow Minnesota DMV receipt and a counterfeit work ID, all in the victim's name, to conduct transactions against the victim's account. (MNFCTF 08-000695)

During this quarter, all Metro Task Force investigators were involved in extensive tactical training in preparation for the Republican National Convention. All Metro investigators were assigned solely to Republican National Convention duties for a ten day period prior to and during the convention which commenced on August 4, 2008.

September 2008

On **September 10, 2008**, Desiree Renee Nieto-Penate, DOB 4/13/84, was charged with Felony Offering a Forged Check and Felony Possession of Counterfeit/Stolen Check. Nieto-Penate admitted to knowing the check was bad before attempting to cash it. (MNFCTF 08-000965)

Nathaniel Strickling, DOB 8/8/65, was charged with Felony Offering a Forged Check on **September 24, 2008**. Strickling attempted to cash a forged money order in Minneapolis. (MNFCTF 08-0966)

On **September 24, 2008**, Xue Vang, DOB 9/7/83, was charged with Felony Offering a Forged check. Vang presented a counterfeit money order in Minneapolis, MN. Two additional money orders were found in his pocket at the time of arrest. (MNFCTF 08-001463)

On **September 30, 2008**, suspects B.C. and K.K. were arrested following search warrants at their businesses. The suspects are involved in a mortgage scam that may involve over 200 properties. Investigation began when one of the straw buyers kept fraudulent documentation used to purchase three vehicles. The vehicles have since been recovered. This investigation is on-going. (MNFCTF 08-001403)

October 2008

In **October 2008**, four female suspects stole two purses from a business in Blaine, MN. The suspects then used financial cards they obtained from the purses to make multiple purchases at Best Buy and Macy's. The suspects have been identified and two have been arrested. The case file is being completed and will be submitted to the Anoka County Attorney's Office for possible felony charges for financial transaction card fraud. (MNFCTF 08-001579)

On **October 6th, 2008**, Antonio James Jackson, DOB 5/28/90, was charged with Felony Offering a Forged Check. Jackson attempted to pass a counterfeit check at TCF Bank on the corporate account of the victim. (MNFCTF 08-001131)

On **October 10th, 2008**, Rafee Bilal Shaka, DOB 4/6/85, was charged with Felony Identity Theft. Shaka was using credit card numbers to purchase merchandise over the internet. Shaka would order the merchandise and then have the items redirect to his address for delivery. UPS advised that they had 3 to 4 redirects per day over the course of 6 months to Shaka's house. A high risk search warrant was conducted on his residence. Entry was made by the Minneapolis SWAT. Stolen property and evidence was recovered. Shaka admitted in a post Miranda statement that he believed to have ordered over \$50,000 in merchandise over the internet. (MNFCTF 08-001496)

November 2008

On **November 4th, 2008**, Ryan John James, DOB 1/13/76, was charged with 2 Felony counts; Possession or Sale of a Counterfeit Check and Offering a Forged Check. James attempted to cash a counterfeit Money Gram money order. He was advised by the teller that it was no good. James came back later with two more counterfeit money orders and was arrested. (MNFCTF 08-001620)

On **November 6th, 2008**, Fernando Bladimir Perez, DOB 5/10/76, was charged by long form complaint with Felony Check Forgery. Perez was issuing forged checks to his employees. (MNFCTF 08-001730)

On **November 19th, 2008**, Ebony Tamika Montgomery, DOB 6/27/79, and Leon Johnson Jr, DOB 10/19/84, were both charged with a Felony Possession or Sale of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Montgomery and Johnson aided and abetted each other, possessed counterfeit checks worth more than \$500 that involved more than two direct victims. (MNFCTF 08-001701)

On **November 19th, 2008**, Michael Angelo Walker Jr, DOB 12/20/89, was charged with Felony Offering a Forged Check and Felony Possession or Sale of Counterfeit Check. (MNFCTF 08-001586)

On **November 25th, 2008**, John Paul Skiba Jr, DOB 3/18/58, was charged with two Felonies; Offering a Forged Check and Possession or Sale of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Skiba attempted to pass a counterfeit check drawn on the business account of Albuquerque Clinical Trials Inc. Skiba stated he received the check in the mail and just wanted to see if it was good. (MNFCTF 08-001675)

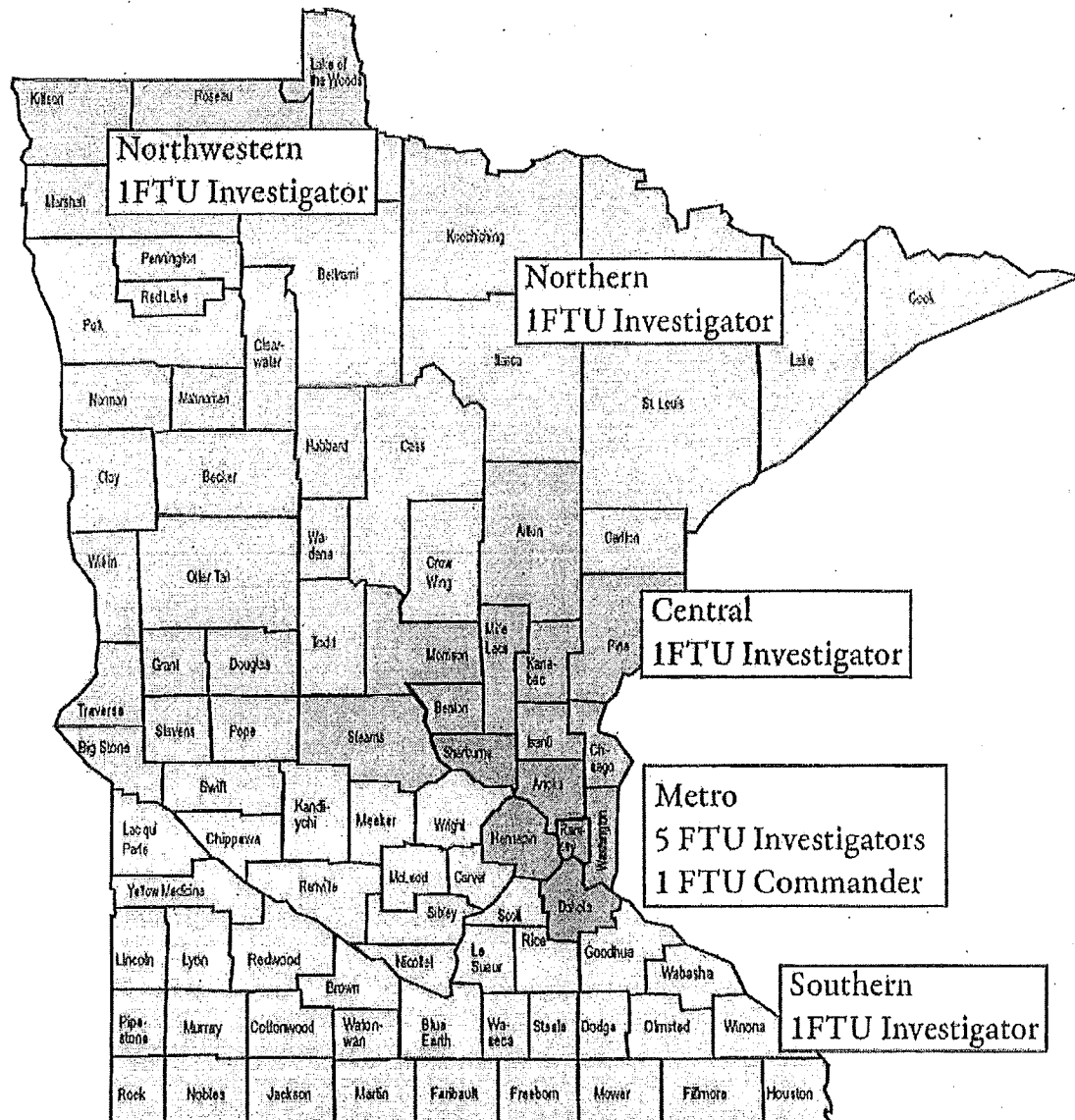
December 2008

Between the months of **November** and **December 2008**, suspects counterfeited numerous driver's licenses and checks and used them throughout the Twin Cities. Several search warrants were executed where evidence of check forgery, possession of counterfeit checks and identity theft were obtained. Two suspects have been identified. This investigation is on-going. (MNFCTF 08-001765)

On **December 18th, 2008**, Bryant Wayne Paige, DOB 12/10/89, was charged with Felony Offering a Forged Check and Felony Possession or Sale of Stolen or Counterfeit Check. Paige attempted to pass a counterfeit check in Minneapolis. Paige stated that he received the check in the mail for no reason and wanted to see if he could get "free money". (MNFCTF 08-001792)

Between the months of **September** and **December 2008**, a suspect stole his father's checks and financial cards and used them to commit over \$20,000 worth of fraud. The suspect has been identified and provided a statement where he admitted to the fraud. The case file is completed and will be submitted to Hennepin County Attorney's Office for possible charges of identity theft, check forgery and financial transaction card fraud. (MNFCTF 08-001829)

Task Force Regions and Number of Investigators Assigned



MN FINANCIAL CRIMES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL MEMBERS
January, 2009

1. Michael Campion, Dept of Public Safety , 651-215-1527,
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6. Bruce Anderson, Sherburne County Sheriff, 763-241-2500, Alternate: James
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10. Not for Profit Retail Merchants Industry – Vacant
11. Fred Laing, Financial Institutions, Upper Midwest Automated Clearing House,
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14. Robert Ellingson, Board of Public Defense, 612-349-2569,
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SFY09 FINANCIAL CRIMES TASK FORCE FUNDING

	SFY 08	SFY 09	TOTAL
Revenue			
SFY 08 Balance	\$135,623		\$135,623
SFY 08 Amt being deducted from Anoka Grant	\$37,000		\$37,000
SFY 09 (less 2.5%)		\$292,500	\$292,500
TOTAL REVENUE	\$172,623	\$292,500	\$465,123
Expenses			
BCA Commander	\$37,500	\$42,500	\$80,000
BCA (for Infrastructure)	\$35,123		\$35,123
Edina Officer	\$50,000		\$50,000
Mille Lacs County Officer	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
MPD Officer		\$50,000	\$50,000
Wright Officer		\$50,000	\$50,000
Duluth Officer		\$50,000	\$50,000
Baxter Officer		\$50,000	\$50,000
Vacant Metro Officer		\$50,000	\$50,000
TOTAL	\$172,623	\$292,500	\$465,123
Other Assets:			
Auto Theft	ESTIMATED	\$70,000	\$70,000
USAO	ESTIMATED	\$101,789	\$101,789
Forfeiture Fund	ESTIMATED	\$14,913	\$14,913
TOTAL - OTHER			\$186,702