



Office of the State's Attorney Union County, Illinois

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**Fifteen arrested in Connection with Burglaries and Stolen Firearms –
New Federal-State-Local Firearms Initiative Announced**

Union County State's Attorney Tyler R. Edmonds and Union County Sheriff David E. Livesay announced today that federal, state and local law enforcement operating under the newly introduced Operation FASTEN Initiative served arrest warrants on 15 individuals early this morning in connection with an ongoing investigation of burglaries and stolen firearms. The majority of these 15 individuals were indicted on November 19 by the Union County Grand Jury following a two-year long investigation led by the Union County Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Together these 15 individuals face over 100 felony counts including:

- 39 counts of Burglary
- 23 counts of Theft
- 23 counts of Possession of Stolen Firearms
- 8 counts of Obstructing Justice
- 5 counts of Money Laundering
- 4 counts of Possession of a Stolen Vehicle
- 2 counts of Production of Cannabis

These charges include burglaries of homes, churches and businesses in Anna, Jonesboro, Cobden, Dongola, Ware and Wolf Lake. Charges also include the sale and possession of stolen property, including firearms, from these burglaries as well as burglaries in neighboring counties in Illinois and Missouri.

Those charged include two juveniles and the following individuals:

<u>Name</u>	<u>DOB</u>	<u>Address</u>
Brandon D. Griffin	12/24/1983	445 Frey Lane, Dongola
Nathan W. Roland	03/14/1991	525 Springville Hill Road, Jonesboro
Wesley A. Conkle	02/19/1985	530 Frey Lane, Dongola
Austin M. Richardson	04/14/1985	317 Wetaug Road, Dongola
John H. Evans	10/18/1986	415 Main Street, Gorham
Polly A. Quintana	10/23/1965	445 Frey Lane, Dongola
Johnny F. Smith	05/13/1985	102 South John Street, Jonesboro
Thomas E. Nelson	10/07/1985	412 Court Street, Vienna



Joshua S. Hathy	07/29/1984	1905 State Route 127 South, Jonesboro
Fawn E. Eddleman	08/04/1985	401 North Green, Anna
Marsha K. Farthing	06/18/1987	530 Frey Lane, Dongola
Damian R. Kerr	02/20/1987	502 McKinley Street, Anna
Kaleb W. Brown	02/10/1991	428 South Front Street, Cobden

These individuals are being held at the Tri-County Jail in Ullin with bonds ranging from \$25,000 to \$340,000. Arrests were made by the Union County Sheriff's Department, ATF, United States Marshals Service, Alexander County Sheriff's Department, Pulaski County Sheriff's Department, Illinois State Police, Anna Police Department and Conservation Police.

The Union County State's Attorney's Office reminds the public that charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial in which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Media: Please contact the Union County Sheriff's Department at (618) 833-5500 for any available mug shots.

Operation FASTEN Initiative Announced

In conjunction with these arrests, the ATF, Union County Sheriff's Department, Alexander County Sheriff's Department, Pulaski County Sheriff's Department and Illinois State Police are announcing the formation of a new initiative to battle illegal firearms trafficking in Southern Illinois. The **Federal and State Trafficking Enforcement Network – FASTEN** will focus on developing sources of information to proactively identify and investigate individuals illegally possessing firearms, trafficking in firearms and using firearms during and in relationship to narcotics trafficking. The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Illinois and the State's Attorney's Offices in Alexander, Pulaski and Union Counties will coordinate investigation and prosecution associated with the Operation FASTEN Initiative.

It is a known fact that we are living in a time of economic crisis and consequently law enforcement must utilize its limited resources as effective and efficiently as possible. Also, these times of economic crisis have caused the criminal elements to target rural type areas for the purpose of enhancing their criminal enterprises. Southern Illinois has seen a growth of firearms being stolen from residences and business, as a result of the state of the economy. Federal and State investigations being conducted in Southern Illinois have established ties of illicit firearms trafficking between the following states: Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee, and Missouri.

Historically, from the 1980's to the present, Southern Illinois has been known for being an area that criminal enterprises have targeted to enhance their illegal activities. These criminal activities include but are not limited to large scale multi-million dollar narcotics distribution operations; firearms trafficking; and public corruption.

It is believed that this new operation approach to ad-hoc Task Forces and commitment of Federal and State law enforcement agencies involved will demand a successful outcome. The Operation FASTEN Initiative will also offer up its resources to assist in investigating crimes of violence that use firearms, to include murder, attempted murder, aggravated assault, home invasions, armed robberies of businesses and drive-by shootings. In addition, in an attempt to help stem the flow of firearms to the criminal element, the Operation FASTEN Initiative will also lend its resources (when available) to investigate residential and/or business burglaries that result in the theft of firearms.

The Operation FASTEN Initiative will target the lower thirty-eight (38) counties of Illinois, which is the primary area covered by the ATF, Fairview Heights Illinois Field Office. Initially only the Alexander County, Pulaski County and Union County Sheriff's Departments will be involved, but as the operation grows, so will the opportunities for additional Sheriff's Departments to become involved, with a goal of establishing an ad-hoc Task Force officer in every county. This new approach to ad-hoc Task Force enforcement of illicit firearms trafficking will prove to be very effective and efficient for both the Federal and State law enforcement entities. Through this new type of task force approach law enforcement will be able to establish a network within that will cover an entire specified area to ensure that both Federal and State agencies are utilizing their limited resources effective and efficient. The overall goal of this operation will be to eliminate criminals' access to firearms. This objective will be obtained through joint investigation and prosecution of those individuals and groups who are criminally involved in the illegal possession of firearms, armed drug dealing, armed violence and the illegal trafficking of firearms, as well as the sharing of firearms related information and intelligence.