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## **16 CHARGED IN ENERGY THEFT CRACKDOWN**

### ***Copper Theft Task Force Uncovers Close to \$400,000 in Energy Theft at Local Businesses***

Today Wayne County Prosecutor Kym L. Worthy announced felony charges against 16 defendants who allegedly stole gas and electricity on behalf of 15 local businesses by tampering with meters. The gas and electricity that was stolen is valued at close to \$400,000. The charges are the culmination of investigations by the Copper Theft Task Force (CTTF)\*.

The 16 defendants are charged with Fraudulent Use of a Public Utility over \$500 and Malicious Destruction of Property – Public Utility which are each felonies carrying a maximum penalty of up to four years in prison and/or a \$5,000 penalty.

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\* - CTTF includes the City of Detroit, Detroit Police Department, DTE Energy, A T & T, Metro PCS, Crime Stoppers, Real Estate One, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

<u>Defendant*</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Electric Stolen</u>	<u>Gas Stolen</u>
Petar Cubi, 41 Sterling Heights	Starlite Coney Island 20445 Van Dyke, Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$38,433.02	\$9,543.41
Vitor Daka, 38 Macomb Township	Lou's Coney Island 12521 Mack Ave., Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$28,890.40	\$0
Tush Duhanaj, 36 Rochester Hills	Super Coney Island 1141 Clay Street, Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$8,581.54	\$0
Qun Gjergjaj, 53 Rochester Hills	Galaxy Coney Island 13611 Grand River Ave., Detroit	1 & 2 - Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 3 & 4 - Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$50,580.57	\$28,443.81
Pashk Gjollleshi, 70 Grosse Pointe	Hollywood Coney Island 20240 Grand River Ave., Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$9,848.05	\$0
Mihill Gojanaj, 53 Clinton Township	Olympia Coney Island 11999 Gratiot Ave., Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$0	\$6,962.93

<u>Defendant*</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Electric Stolen</u>	<u>Gas Stolen</u>
Roza Gojanaj, 49 Clinton Township	Olympia Coney Island, 11999 Gratiot Ave., Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$6,099.91	\$0
Trang Huyne, 53 Sterling Heights	Beautiful Nails, 12240 E. Warren, Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$2,705.03	\$0
Badri Jamil, 60 Rochester Hills	Consumers Market 4349 Grand River Ave., Detroit	1. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$1,531.36	\$0
Pjeter Marku, 53 Warren	Dino's Coney Island 12001 Livernois, Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$4,344.86	\$4,687.81
Xhevalin Marku, 47 Warren	L.A. Coney Island 14300 Gratiot Ave., Detroit	1 & 2 - Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 3 & 4 - Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$25,814.68	\$10,993.35
George Mirdita, 33 Sterling Heights	Embassy Coney 14987 Gratiot Ave., Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$10,517.14	\$0

<u>Defendant*</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Electric Stolen</u>	<u>Gas Stolen</u>
Pjeter Nikolla, 46 Warren	Tom's Coney Island 19441 Schoolcraft, Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$17,965.29	\$0
Pjeter Nikolla, 46 Warren	Saranda Coney Island, 15221 E. Warren, Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$34,860.11	\$25,792.39
Farid Sitto, 46 Farmington Hills	Deluxe Coney Island, 2923 E. 7 Mile Rd., Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$9,472.98	\$0
Mark Thaqi, 62 Clinton Township	Motor City Coney Island, 831 E. McNichols, Detroit	1. Public Utility - Fraudulent Use over \$500 - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000 2. Malicious Destruction of Utility Property - felony punishable by 4 years and/or \$5,000	\$54,997.62	\$34,890.05
Totals			\$304,642.56	\$92,870

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Grand Total	\$397,512.50
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\* - DTE account  
holders on behalf of  
business

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DTE Energy (DTE) targeted the 16 businesses when they observed a significant decrease in power usage. Once this was confirmed inspectors went to the businesses and discovered the gas and electric meters had been tampered with to steal energy from DTE. The cases were then referred to

Copper Theft Task Force members at the Detroit Police Department who further investigated and prepared warrants for review and charging by the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

DTE uses a number of methods to detect utility theft. The most common methods are: using technology that analyzes fluctuations in energy usage; meter readers and other field employees who discover theft; neighbors who call DTE and anonymous tip lines. The public is encouraged to call the Energy Theft Tip line at 1-800-441-6698 to report suspected theft.

"Utility theft increases our operating costs. Those costs, like all operating costs, eventually find their way back to legitimate customers, said Michael Lynch, Chief Security Officer for DTE.

"DTE Energy offers many programs and partners with community groups to help customers that are going through tough times. We want to help. Utility theft is not the answer."

"Times are tough for everyone right now; families, individuals with no families to support and businesses, big and small, said Prosecutor Worthy.

"But I implore everyone – the way out of financial difficulty is NOT crime. That will only compound your problems severely. I urge you to call 1-800-477-4747 to seek assistance from DTE Energy if you are unable to pay your utility bills."

Arrangements are being made for the defendants to turn themselves in.

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