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# SNEWS Edmonton

### Home Cops smash \$300,000 stolen News Edmonton

goods operation Funding drug habit: cops

By GLENN KAUTH, Sun Media



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A couple on AISH have been charged after police smashed a \$300,000 stolen construction goods ring.

The man and woman - in addition to the disability cash - had also been receiving money from the province's homelessness eviction fund in order to stay in their east Edmonton house, say police.

Officers seized thousands of dollars worth of stolen goods from the house during a Feb. 23 bust.

Police are now searching for the rightful owners of about 400 items, including everything from valuable tools likes heavy-duty drills worth up to \$10,000 to more mundane construction supplies like shop vacuums.

"We need companies to call us so we can document exactly what was taken," said acting Det. James Vanderland, who noted that identifying the owners will also make it easier to lay more charges.

The Feb. 23 bust, along with a subsequent investigation at a storage facility near 128 Avenue and 146 Street, resulted in the seizure of about \$300,000 worth of goods.

For Darlene La Trace, the executive vice-president of the Edmonton Construction Association, said the case highlights the growing problem of thefts from construction



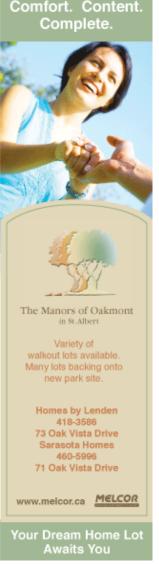
Acting detective James Vanderland looks on as a recovered stolen guitar sits in the foreground at a police warehouse. Police are looking for owners after 400 pieces of property, worth approximately \$300,000, were recovered from a home and storage facility during an investigation into thefts from construction sites, fenced compounds and work trucks. (Darryl Dyck/Sun)



PHOTO GALLERIES

Stolen items





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sites.

"We know the issue is greater than what's actually being published," said La Trace. Firms, she noted, "can't afford to make a claim to insurance, so there's so much more of this that goes unreported."

In the most recent case, police came upon the stolen goods stored at the house near 118 Avenue and 58 Street by accident. At the time, an officer from downtown division had tipped investigators about a stolen truck. But when they got there, they spotted three people loading some of the goods into the vehicle, leading police to take out a search warrant that turned up even more stolen items.

Vanderland believes the goods were being re-sold at discount prices in order to finance drug habits.

An arrest warrant has been issued for 34-year-old Trevor Douglas Bennett, facing 14 counts of possession of stolen property.

Nadine Nicole Hopkins, 30, is facing 12 counts of possession of stolen property.

In the meantime, those who believe they might be owners of the goods can visit the north division community station, 14203 50 St., to view a photo album of them.

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