

https://www.kmov.com/news/multi-million-dollar-catalytic-converter-theft-ring-linked-to-farmington/article_29233a1c-80b7-11ec-8e59-db16647e3552.html

Multi-million dollar catalytic converter theft ring linked to Farmington

RUSSELL KINSAUL, REPORTER

UPDATED JAN 29, 2022

ST. LOUIS (KMOV.com) – The theft of catalytic converters has become so common that auto repair shops are seeing a steady flow of cars brought in for repairs. Joe Barbaglia is owner of Columbia Auto Repair near The Hill.

"At least two to three a week, pretty often," he said.

Thieves steal catalytic converters for the precious metals inside which include platinum, palladium and rhodium. Thieves can sell them as scrap.

The scope of the problem and just how lucrative the crime can be for thieves, wasn't clear until details of a 2-year investigation by Homeland Security Investigations were revealed this week. Seven Springfield, Missouri, area residents were indicted by a federal grand jury for their alleged involvement in a multi-million dollar catalytic converter theft ring.

Federal investigators said 24-year old Evan Marshall, considered the ringleader of the criminal enterprise, received \$6.8 million dollars over a 2-year period selling stolen catalytic converters. Springfield Police Chief Paul Williams spoke about the investigation.

"As this investigation continued, detectives noticed a direct link between Evan Marshall's bank records and the rise and fall of reported catalytic converter thefts," Williams said.

According to federal investigators, Marshall sold tens of thousands of stolen catalytic converters to a company in Mountain Home, Arkansas which was unnamed in the indictment. Investigators say a large number of catalytic converters was eventually sold to a company in Farmington. Authorities didn't name the Farmington company, but said it paid more than \$18 million for the catalytic converters it received.

Authorities said the catalytic converter theft ring operated from Dec. 12, 2019 to Oct. 15, 2021.

Copyright 2022 KMOV. All rights reserved.

Russell Kinsaul

News 4 Reporter

Russell Kinsaul is a general assignment reporter for News 4 St. Louis