



## STATEMENT OF AT&T CONNECTICUT

**Regarding Raised Senate Bill No. 1128  
An Act Concerning Interruption of Telecommunications Service,  
Scrap Metal Processors and Motor Vehicle Recyclers  
Before the Committee on Judiciary  
March 19, 2009**

**Proposal:**

Section One of Raised Senate Bill No. 1128 would add to the list of offenses which constitute larceny in the second degree to include when a person steals property used in the provision of telecommunications service which would prevent an individual from making an emergency telephone call. Larceny in the second degree is a Class C felony punishable by a term of imprisonment not less than one year nor more than ten years pursuant to Section 53a-35a of the General Statutes of Connecticut.

**Comments:**

AT&T strongly supports Raised Senate Bill No. 1128, particularly Section One of the bill, and thanks the Committee for raising the proposal.

Two years ago, the Connecticut General Assembly became one of the first states to pass a law to combat the growing practice of metal theft. That law requires scrap metal processors to keep better records on scrap metal which it purchases in order to cut down on stolen property handled by such processors and allowing police to have more information to identify and stop thieves. The law has become a model that has been used by other state legislatures across the country.

While the law passed two years ago has helped to reduce some thefts, metal thefts continue to be an issue for AT&T, other companies, and consumers. In fact, a recent report by the National Insurance Crime Bureau found that there were more than 13,500 insurance claims filed involving metal thefts – most related to copper – between just January 2006 and November 2008. While the economic downturn has reduced prices for scrap metal, those reductions are expected to be temporary as the economy improves; and, in fact, according to the *Wall Street Journal* copper prices are already up nearly 20 percent this calendar year.

As a company, AT&T has taken a number of steps to reduce the opportunity for thefts of its property including daily security checks of its facilities and keeping spare copper wire locked up. These steps have helped to reduce theft, particularly theft that had been relatively easy to commit. However, thieves have adapted as well, and we are seeing more instances of thieves stealing equipment which is in-use and providing service to customers. When thieves steal equipment that is being used to provide service, they victimize not only AT&T but also our customers who lose service, in particular access to emergency 911 service. Attached to our testimony are copies of news stories from

around the country detailing thefts of telecommunications equipment which have led to service outages for customers.

AT&T believes that the legislation before you will help to give police and prosecutors another tool to use to punish those who steal property and as a result impact consumers' ability to make emergency phone calls.

**Conclusion:**

AT&T strongly support Raised Senate Bill No. 1128 because it will impose appropriate criminal penalties on persons who steal property and in the process put consumers at greater risk by depriving them of being able to make emergency telephone calls.

**Cooper Theft & Community Impact  
Nationwide, February 2007 - February 2009**

**Theft leads to power outage for more than 16,500**

**Herald Dispatch.com**

By Curtis Johnson

11 February 2009

**Two held in copper theft at substation**

**Greenville News**

By Terry Cregar

6 February 2009

**Attempted Copper Theft Leads to Power Outage**

**WYFF4.com**

4 February 2009

**Thieves target phone wires**

**Macon Telegraph**

By Ashley Tusan Joyne

31 October 2008

**Georgia Emc; Metals Theft Summit Brings Renewed Commitment to Catch Thieves  
Biotech Week**

22 October 2008

**POWER OUTAGES; Copper thieves now hitting AEP sites**

**The Columbus Dispatch**

By Dan Gearino

9 October 2008

**Copper wire thefts increasing ; Upswing in Valencia County knocks out phone and  
911 services**

**Albuquerque Journal**

By Clara Garcia

22 September 2008

**Thieves leave 210 without phone service**

**Charleston Gazette**

19 September 2009

**\$2,000 worth of copper stolen from AEP substation**

**Times Recorder**

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**Copper thieves cut off phones**

**Greenville News**

By Anna Simon

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**Entergy Arkansas Offers \$5,000 Reward in Hot Springs Copper Theft  
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1 May 2008

**DSL service restored in area  
South Bend Tribune**  
By Mart Goodland Heline  
26 April 2008

**Copper theft leaves 6,000 in dark  
Associated Press Newswires**  
11 April 2008

**Thieves turning copper into cash  
The Republican**  
By Patrick Johnson  
17 February 2008

**Power outage caused by attempted copper theft  
Associated Press Newswires**  
31 January 2008

**Wire theft causes outages  
The Republican**  
By Lori Stabile  
11 December 2007

**Copper Thieves Cause Power Outage, Damage at Houston Library  
Library Journal.com**  
By Jennifer Pinkowski  
5 December 2007

**Man questioned as failed copper theft knocks out power Possible suspect quizzed in failed  
copper theft; SUBSTATION DAMAGE CUTS ELECTRICITY TO 5,800  
The Lexington Herald Leader**  
By Ashlee Clark  
11 October 2007

**Copper theft causes outages  
Topeka Capital-Journal**  
6 October 2007

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**Copper wire thieves cause power outage**

**Topeka Capital Journal**

By Tim Hrenchir

20 July 2006

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**Theft leads to power outage for more than 16,500**

**Herald Dispatch.com**

By: Curtis Johnson

11 February 2009

HUNTINGTON — Electricity was cut to more than 16,000 customers midday Wednesday, as crews made repairs after a copper theft in the West End of Huntington.

The outage was short lived and affected customers in Cabell, Lincoln and Wayne counties. It affected 16,650 at its peak about 12:15 p.m. The number fell below 3,500 minutes later, according to American Electric Power.

AEP spokesman Phil Moyer said a late-night copper theft is to blame. It occurred at the utility's West Huntington station.

Unusual readings at the station prompted concern. Crews visited the station and immediately noticed the theft. It left energized equipment in a dangerous ungrounded condition.

Moyer estimates the theft will cost thousands of dollars in repairs for \$200 to \$300 in copper. He said the outage also would impact the utility's reliability to its customers, many of whom were affected by last month's ice storm.

"It's a huge frustration for them and certainly causes us undue work," he said. "It's a huge, huge impact for a very small amount of financial gain."

AEP did not have any suspects as of midday Wednesday. Anyone with information about those responsible should call report it to local law enforcement or to call AEP's toll-free security hotline at 866-747-5845.

The utility offers a reward of up to \$5,000 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of thieves who steal copper from electrical facilities.

Moyer said the frequency of copper theft has declined with as the metal's worth decreased. The utility takes security measures at its facilities to prevent theft and terrorism.

Moyer said copper theft remains a dangerous crime for those who break into a station and cut wires.

Moyer explained Wednesday's repair caused outages wide customer base. He said other stations were shut down to protect crews making repairs at the West Huntington station.

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**Two held in copper theft at substation**

**Greenville News**

By: Terry Cregar

6 February 2009

Two people were arrested Thursday following a break-in at a Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative substation that led to a fire and knocked out electrical power to around 3,000 customers early Wednesday.

Nathan Scott Ramey, 20, and Nathan Mark Sutherland, 25, both of 209 Bivins St., Pickens, were each charged with larceny and malicious damage to property, according to arrest warrants from the Pickens County Sheriff's Office.

Warrants charge that Ramey and Sutherland damaged a substation on Breazeale Road in Liberty. The fence was cut and the substation was damaged while copper was removed, according to warrants.

In a press statement from the Sheriff's Office, officials said two men cut copper grounding wire, which caused power outages.

Blue Ridge Electric spokesman Terry Ballenger said Wednesday the outage cut power to 3,070 customers in Pickens County for around two hours that morning.

Ramey and Sutherland were being held Thursday afternoon in the Pickens County Detention Center.

**Attempted Copper Theft Leads to Power Outage**

**WYFF4.com**

4 February 2009

A few thousand people lost power in Pickens County on Wednesday morning after someone broke into a substation and tried to steal copper wire.

It happened just before dawn at the substation on Breazeale Road just outside the city of Easley.

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative said someone cut through a fence surrounding the substation and tried to steal copper.

officials said.

"It overheated and burned up on the inside," said Blue Ridge Co-op spokesman Terry Ballenger. "Fortunately, the heat and flame didn't get outside the confines of that voltage regulator, or it might have been a much bigger problem."

At the height of the outage, about 3,100 Blue Ridge Electric customers were without power.

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"We were concerned about the folks being out of power in their homes in this cold weather," Ballenger said.

One of those customers was Jerry Duncan, who lives across the street from the substation.

Duncan said that after a couple of heart attacks, he has to sleep with an oxygen tank at night.

He said he awoke around 6:30 a.m. when his electricity went out, but he stayed in bed to keep warm.

"It did get chilly," Duncan said.

Ballenger said the person who broke into the substation may have been hurt trying to steal the copper.

The person managed to steal only about \$45 dollars worth of the metal and dropped a lot of it on the way out, he said.

"The signs are that they left in a hurry so there may have been some injuries there," Ballenger said.

Blue Ridge Electric crews had the power restored for most people in about two hours and the substation was repaired by about noon.

Ballenger estimates the total cost of repairing the damage could be in the thousands of dollars.

"I think when you tally all that up it's going to be a substantial sum," he said. "and the person, if they're caught, will pay a price."

### **Thieves target phone wires**

#### **Macon Telegraph**

By: Ashley Tusan Joyne

31 October 2008

Authorities continue to investigate a copper theft Wednesday when about 600 feet of telephone wire was taken from three telephone poles in east Bibb County.

Bibb County sheriff's investigators discovered the wire missing after responding to a downed pole in the 4100 block of Jeffersonville between Shady Rest Lane and Harold Road, according to a sheriff's office report.

Sheriff's office spokesman Lt. George Meadows said someone posing as an AT&T contract electrician likely used a vehicle to knock down the poles, which ran only the telephone wire.

Customers served by the poles were without phone service for hours, he said, but service was restored by the end of the day. The total cost of repairs for AT&T was about \$10,000, he said.

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Meadows said the sheriff's office has received other reports from utility workers about wire theft from cable poles in Macon and others parts of the county during the last three to four weeks, including off Rocky Creek Road and in the Bloomfield neighborhood. The thefts usually occur late at night or early in the morning, he said.

The incident Wednesday happened between 6:30 and 6:50 a.m., according to the report.

The person or people responsible for the theft are using unmarked bucket trucks and posing as contractors for AT&T and other various utilities, authorities said. Meadows said the possible suspects are white males in their mid-40s. The vehicles involved are believed to resemble large white pickup trucks with buckets that retract over the cab or over the rear end of the vehicle.

The thieves are removing the phone cable by cutting it into approximately 6-foot sections, according to authorities.

"The indications are that they're cutting them as they go and taking the pieces to a recycler to get cash for the copper inside ... because you can't use the wire after you cut it into pieces that small," Meadows said.

Residents are advised to be on the lookout for people posing as contract workers, particularly for AT&T, which Meadows said does not employ outside electricians or workers.

AT&T workers carry blue and white company badges marked "employee," the employee's name and the badge's expiration date.

**Georgia Emc; Metals Theft Summit Brings Renewed Commitment to Catch Thieves**  
**Biotech Week**  
22 October 2008

2008 OCT 22 - (NewsRx.com) -- "I'm sure we all wish the passage of a law could eradicate a criminal act, but it doesn't work that way," said Georgia Bureau of Investigations (GBI) Director Vernon Keenan.

Keenan made the remarks at a Metals Theft Stakeholder Summit held Oct. 6 in middle Georgia and telecast in Atlanta. Keenan referred to legislation passed in 2007 which allows prosecutors a greater ability to seek a felony conviction (rather than a misdemeanor) for the crime of metals theft. Despite changes to the law, however, metals thefts continue to rise at an alarming rate.

Consequently, Georgia Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) hosted the Metals Theft Stakeholders Summit during which approximately 100 representatives from across Georgia, representing utilities, telecommunications, law enforcement, district attorneys, railroads, homebuilders, apartment owners, automobile dealers and recyclers, among others, gathered to bring attention to the widespread nature of these crimes and share the devastating impact to businesses and consumers.

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Since these organizations and consumer groups have been hardest hit and have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars associated with the problem, they are partnering to galvanize their grassroots efforts in communities throughout Georgia to enhance coordination of security and communication among stakeholders and consider ways to stem the rising tide of these costly crimes.

According to Georgia EMC Vice President of Government Relations and Communications and Member Services Bill Verner, thieves are becoming increasingly bold and careless when stealing metals.

"Consumers foot the bill for the damage left by a wire thief. Utilities must pass along increased costs to replace and repair damaged equipment, and more importantly, our employees and the public are left vulnerable to electrocution hazards in the wake of many such crimes," Verner said.

"Homebuilders, already struggling in today's tough economy, must replace copper stolen from new and vacant houses. Apartment owners must increase rent to recover costs, and taxpayers are bearing the costly treatment in emergency rooms for burn victims who've been injured during the course of break-ins to energized electric substations. The costs to the consumer -- and public safety -- are tremendous," he said.

Consequences extend beyond consumers' pocketbooks. Recreation leagues have been forced to cancel soccer and basketball practice for hundreds of young athletes throughout the state, because copper has been ripped from poles which light soccer fields and basketball courts. Churches have suspended services after copper was taken from pipes and air conditioners, and a small historic church in rural Washington County was burned to the ground last year by copper thieves who tried to cover up their crime with the fire.

According to Verner, metals thefts are now causing power outages in some parts of the country. Yesterday approximately 7,400 residents in Ohio lost power following a copper theft. "When wire is ripped from a substation as happened this week in Ohio," he said, "It can result in entire neighborhoods losing power."

Since metals thefts affect a wide spectrum of businesses and associations, the summit attracted representatives from the electric cooperatives throughout Georgia, Georgia Transmission Corp., Georgia Power, AT&T, MEAG Power, Southwire, Homebuilders Association of Georgia, Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia, Georgia Sheriffs Association, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police, Norfolk Southern, Georgia Apartment Association and Georgia Automobile Dealers Association, among others.

During the meeting, stakeholders discussed possible ways to reduce the rash of thefts, while representatives ranging from the Homebuilders Association of Georgia to Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia discussed the financial and safety impacts of these crimes and the challenges they face when attempting to enforce the law.

The EMCs in Georgia reported approximately 350 incidents of metals thefts in 2007 with costs

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reaching \$200,000. Companies such as Georgia Transmission Corp. reported as many as 98 incidents (through September 2008) totaling \$500,000. AT&T and Georgia Power spokespersons reported 56 incidents (through August 2008) costing more than \$100,000, and 147 incidents (through September 2008) totaling \$237,000, respectively.

Coalition members pledged to maintain an open dialogue among stakeholders; strengthen relationships among recyclers, sheriffs, chiefs of police, district attorneys, and public and private businesses; pursue additional avenues of prevention and work to close any loops in existing state law.

Stakeholders agree it will take a solid partnership and cooperation to lessen the epidemic and stem the surge of these unlawful acts, and each committed during the meeting to become an active partner in the effort to reduce metals thefts.

Georgia EMC is the statewide trade association representing the state's 42 EMCs, Oglethorpe Power Corp. and Georgia Transmission Corp. Collectively, Georgia's customer-owned EMCs provide electricity and related services to four million people, nearly half of Georgia's population, across 73 percent of the state's land area.

**POWER OUTAGES; Copper thieves now hitting AEP sites**

**The Columbus Dispatch**

By: Dan Gearino

9 October 2008

Thieves turned off the lights for parts of Dublin and Clintonville on Tuesday by stealing copper wire from electricity substations, part of what American Electric Power says is a trend that could lead to serious injury or death.

AEP reports 13 copper thefts in the past two months, seven of them in the past 10 days.

"We have suddenly been hit by a real rash," said Vikki Michalski, an AEP spokeswoman.

About 4,900 Clintonville residents lost power early Tuesday just after a copper theft. That afternoon, about 2,500 Dublin residents lost power for the same reason.

The incidents are a relatively new wrinkle in the growth of scrap-metal thefts across the region. In this case, the victims extend far from the building that has been stripped, as the power station goes offline and an entire neighborhood loses power. Sometimes the theft doesn't lead to a power failure, but workers need to turn off the electricity while they make repairs.

AEP says the damage from a theft typically takes up to 90 minutes to repair and costs about \$12,000 per incident, costs that eventually will be passed on to customers.

Unlike more-common copper thefts, such as from construction sites, thieves in power stations are one wrong move away from a high-voltage death.

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"It's scary to think people would go to this level (of danger) to get at metals," said Dana McDaniel, Dublin's deputy city manager.

His house was one of those that lost power, although for only a few minutes while workers replaced the stolen wiring.

AEP is adding security systems at some stations and replacing some of the coveted copper parts with metal that is less likely to be stolen. The company also is offering a \$5,000 reward for information that leads to prosecution of thieves.

Copper prices shot up in 2005, and 2006, rising to more than \$4 per pound on the London Metal Exchange. Prices stayed around that level until the past few months, when they dropped to below \$2.50.

"The price of scrap metal has become so (high) that it's unfortunately lucrative for thieves to steal," said Lt. Michael Woods, supervisor of the burglary section for the Columbus police. "Things like copper wire, aluminum siding, copper downspouts ... are being taken across the city."

The rising prices correspond to the growth in metal-related thefts in Columbus, he said. Complete statistics were not immediately available, but he did have records of metal thefts in January of the past four years, rising each year from seven in 2005 to 113 in 2008.

Under a state law that went into effect last month, scrap-metal sellers are required to show a photo ID and prove they own items such as guard rails and beer kegs.

Woods was unaware of any injuries or deaths arising from the thefts in Columbus. However, last year, a northeastern Ohio man was electrocuted while trying to steal copper from a power substation.

**Copper wire thefts increasing ; Upswing in Valencia County knocks out phone and 911 services**

**Albuquerque Journal**

By: Clara Garcia

22 September 2008

Valencia County has seen a recent upswing in copper wire thefts, especially telephone wire, costly hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages and putting area residents in danger by knocking out phone services including 911 access.

The price of copper pipe and tubing has risen over the last few years -- now about \$4 a pound -- giving thieves an incentive to steal it and resell it, Valencia County Sheriff Rene Rivera said. The problem has been increasing over the past year, but lately, reports of copper theft have become commonplace.

"It's getting pretty bad," Rivera said. "It seems like it's happening every day or every other day."

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In the past week, at least three different occurrences of copper wire theft have resulted in areas of the county losing telephone service.

Rivera said the crime not only affects residents' service, but it also affects public safety. Recently, 911 services were down for several hundred people as a result of a copper wire theft. Someone stole several hundred feet of copper wire from the El Cerro Mission area as well as on N.M. 116, south of Belen. Another theft happened on a weekend morning on Los Lentos Road. Both instances left hundreds of people without phone service for hours.

"It's plaguing the community," said Gary Younger, a spokesman for Qwest, about the rash of copper thefts. "We're talking more than just theft; it's an assault on public safety. You're looking at putting some critical services at risk, such as hospitals and schools, when the telephone lines are down."

Younger said thieves taking the copper wire from telephone lines are impacting their customers' ability to reach community services, to conduct business and to contact emergency personnel when needed.

"This has been a problem that's been going on for a while, and it's recently gotten worse," Younger said. "Our technicians are working as quickly as possible as soon as there is an interruption in service. We are finding that our technicians are spending more time on repairs rather than being able to work with customers."

Rivera said most of the copper wire thefts from utility companies are happening in the middle of the night when it's less likely the thieves can be seen or caught. "I think it might be the same people, and they're taking out of the county to sell," Rivera said. "They're taking anywhere from 200 to 700 feet at a time."

The rash of copper thefts is not new to Valencia County or to any other area of the state or country. But while the unincorporated areas of Valencia County seems to be the hardest hit, law enforcement officials in local municipalities say they have either received few or no complaints.

Belen Police Capt. Dan Robb said he couldn't recall any reports of stolen copper wire within the city limits. He did say that he has received a complaint from a Belen recycling center that people have tried to sell it. "The person who owns that place is very diligent and won't buy it from them," Robb said. "One time he did, and put it to the side, but that was the only time. Since then, he is very cautious of what he buys."

Los Lunas Police Detective Captain Charles Nuanes said the village hasn't experienced the volume of copper theft as areas in the county. He said that the last one he can remember occurred in November 2006 at the construction site of the new county courthouse on N.M. 314. According to a criminal complaint filed earlier this year, police charged 51-year-old George Hale of Los Lunas with commercial burglary in connection with the incident.

Kevin Fuller, spokesman for PNM, says while the company does experience copper theft, it's not very common. "Our main concern is safety," he said. "People are dealing with high voltage

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areas, and they're putting themselves in danger when they attempt this. Not only are they putting themselves in danger, they're also putting the safety of residents and businesses in danger."

Copper thefts can cause power failures and whenever someone does remove wire from the equipment, there is the potential that it will affect customers, he said.

"No one can ever assume that the lines aren't energized, even at construction sites," he added.

Tiffany Payne, a spokeswoman at Comcast, said she spoke to the company's technical group and they have not experienced any issues regarding copper thefts in the area. "We had a couple of fiber cuts a few months ago, but we didn't see any thefts," Payne said.

While other utility companies are not experiencing the number of thefts that Qwest is, Younger says that the problem is happening all over New Mexico and everyone needs to be vigilant in keeping an eye out for suspicious activity. "This is kind of a community problem, and we're hoping for a community response. We're asking that if anybody witnesses some sort of suspicious activity or someone talking about copper thefts, to call law enforcement.

"By the same token, we're also asking metal recyclers to report if anyone brings them any material they suspect is stolen," Younger said.

In response to the recent increase in copper thefts, Qwest has employed security measures that are both seen and unseen to assist law enforcement in apprehending those responsible, he said.

**Thieves leave 210 without phone service**  
**Charleston Gazette**  
19 September 2009

A spokesman said 210 households in the Coopers Creek area lost phone service after thieves stole more than 200 feet of copper from a Verizon cable.

The incident happened early Wednesday morning, cutting service for more than 24 hours, said Harry Mitchell, spokesman for Verizon.

Phone company crews had to replace the cable and re-splice the line. Service was back up by 8 p.m. Thursday, Mitchell said.

"People are looking for copper everywhere and we have had a number of incidents of copper theft in our lines over the past year or so," Mitchell said.

"It's something we're taking very seriously and we're working with law enforcement. A number of arrests have already been made in the past several months."

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**\$2,000 worth of copper stolen from AEP substation**

**Times Recorder**

22 July 2008

ZANESVILLE --&nbsp;American Electric Power will offer a reward for information leading to the successful prosecution of the person or persons responsible for a copper theft at a local station.

The theft at the Hughes Street substation forced AEP to cut power to the station for several hours Monday evening.

According to Zanesville Police Department Capt. Doug Merry, officers discovered the fence surrounding the Hughes Street substation had been cut Monday morning.

Upon further inspection, they noticed copper wiring had been stolen and reported the incident to AEP, who sent crews to investigate.

Merry said it's unclear when the break-in occurred, whether it was late Sunday night/early Monday morning or over the weekend, but they stole \$2,000 worth of ground wire.

"Which is heavy-duty, solid core copper," Merry said. "It's a wonder whoever did it didn't get absolutely fried. They're probably extremely lucky they're still alive."

The incident is under investigation.

AEP spokesperson Vikki Michalski said the ZPD informed AEP of the theft on Monday and workers would make repairs resulting in power being out from 6:30 to 10 p.m.

She said the boundaries of the outage included Main Street to the north, White Oak Avenue to the east, Sharon Avenue to the south and Luck Avenue to the west.

According to her, copper thefts have been a growing problem for AEP and other utilities. She said these types of thefts cause hazardous situation and extensive damage to equipment.

**Copper thieves cut off phones**

**Greenville News**

By: Anna Simon

2 May 2008

Recent thefts of copper wire from phone lines left some homes and businesses in Greenville and Anderson counties without phone service.

"AT&T is taking this matter very seriously," said Pamela Lackey, president of AT&T South Carolina. "We are working with law enforcement, as well as those legislators proactively doing what they can to respond to a growing issue."

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Anderson County detectives are investigating the recent theft of copper wiring from phone lines in the Pelzer area, said Susann Griffin, spokeswoman for the Anderson County Sheriff's Office.

"Copper theft is an increasing crime all over Anderson County, all over anywhere," Griffin said. "There is a market out there for the copper."

The steady rise in the market price of copper during the past few years has led some people to extreme measures, including stealing copper cables from houses and telephone poles, Lackey said.

In addition to compromising the safety of individuals, tampering with phone lines that the public uses to place emergency telephone calls or to request emergency assistance is a felony under federal law, Lackey said.

AT&T urges shop owners, employees and anyone else with information on the recent copper thefts to alert authorities, Lackey said. AT&T also asks the public to be cognizant of suspicious unmarked utility vehicles where potential thieves may be stealing copper cables.

A bill toughening a law against unlawful purchase of copper recently passed the state House and has been referred to a state Senate Judiciary subcommittee.

"I'm aware of the problem. Obviously we are going to have to do something about it," said state Sen. Lewis Vaughn, R-Greenville.

**Entergy Arkansas Offers \$5,000 Reward in Hot Springs Copper Theft  
Targeted News Service  
1 May 2008**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., May 1 -- Entergy Arkansas issued the following news release:

As the theft of copper wiring is growing, Entergy Arkansas, Inc., with support from the Hot Springs Police Department's Crimestoppers Awareness Program, is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to conviction of persons responsible for the theft that resulted in a power outage at the Hot Springs South substation last week.

Entergy Arkansas has been hit with a rash of incidents of copper theft so far this year, a sign that sky-high prices for base metals are thwarting efforts to crack down on the crime. Copper wiring and other metals are crucial to the operation of distribution and transmission networks, making electric utilities such as Entergy Arkansas magnets to thieves.

"Entergy Arkansas is committed to the safety of our system and to the safety of the communities that we serve," said Tom Maupin, security specialist, Entergy Arkansas, Inc. "We're asking the public to join us in being vigilant and to report any information related to copper thefts."

The Hot Springs Police Department Criminal Investigation Division is working closely with Entergy Arkansas in resolving these thefts. Anyone with information is encouraged to call the

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Crimestoppers hotline at 501 321-6742 where they will remain anonymous. Citizens are also encouraged to call the Hot Springs Police Department (501 321-6789) if they see any suspicious activity around any of the Entergy Arkansas substations in the area.

In a two-week span, thieves entered the company's Hot Springs Service Center and the South substation, stealing copper and causing considerable damage to the facilities, including a power outage for 2,800 customers last Sunday. Thieves have also broken into service centers and substations in Malvern, Little Rock, Hot Springs, Jacksonville, and El Dorado in the past year.

"Copper wire theft poses a risk to service reliability for customers and also results in a significant cost to replace and repair the damage," said Maupin.

Entergy Arkansas is taking various steps to reduce the number of copper wire thefts. For example, the company is currently utilizing several new technologies on its equipment to protect its system. These technologies make it harder to take the copper, and the stolen copper can be identified after it has been taken.

**DSL service restored in area**

**South Bend Tribune**

By: Marti Goodland Heline

26 April 2008

Service was restored to AT&T high-speed Internet customers by early Friday after an 11-hour outage that began Thursday afternoon, according to company officials.

Service for many customers was restored in a shorter period of time because AT&T was able to reroute the affected DSL or long-distance service while repairs were made, said Chris Bauer, an AT&T spokesman.

However, the problems were more widespread than AT&T realized at first and affected many small business as well as residential customers.

The area affected included northwest Indiana from South Bend west to the Indiana-Illinois border.

"We had a lot of calls from really angry clients," said Joe Grossbauer, of Chesterton, Ind., owner of a company that provides Web site hosting, e-mail and exchange services for clients using T1 lines.

He said his connections went down just before 1 p.m. CDT and came back about 10:30 p.m.

"They were swamped with calls," Grossbauer said of his experience in contacting AT&T and speaking with technical service representatives.

However, Bauer said, AT&T did not consider the number of customer calls to be very large, possibly because of the rerouting AT&T did.

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Among those affected during the outage were Valparaiso University and a number of businesses in centers like University Park Mall in Mishawaka.

Businesses use DSL service to run credit or debit card purchases.

Problems began when a cable was cut Thursday along a railroad line between South Bend and Portage, Ind., in an apparent copper theft attempt, Bauer said.

The situation was somewhat unusual for AT&T because the lines affected were leased from a third party, Quest, and not owned by AT&T, Bauer said, so the company did not have as much control as it normally does.

**Copper theft leaves 6,000 in dark**  
**Associated Press Newswires**  
11 April 2008

DECATUR, Tenn. (AP) - A theft of copper from a power company substation caused a Friday morning blackout for about 6,000 people and closed schools for the day.

A Meigs County sheriff's dispatcher says most of the East Tennessee county was without power after the theft at a Volunteer Energy substation.

She said the outage started about 2 a.m. and power was restored about 7:30 a.m.

Schools were closed Friday. No arrests have been made.

**Thieves turning copper into cash**  
**The Republican**  
By: Patrick Johnson  
17 February 2008

Geologists will argue that copper is not a precious metal, but they will never convince the copper thieves.

With the price of copper - officially considered a semiprecious metal - soaring in the last two years, copper theft is becoming a profitable, albeit illegal, enterprise.

Utility company yards, plumbing supply stores, factories, and vacant or abandoned properties are falling prey to copper bandits.

"People do some stupid things to extract copper from electrical substations," said David D. Graves, spokesman for National Grid.

The theft of copper is extremely troublesome in the real estate business, according to Kevin M. Sears, a Springfield Realtor who is also secretary of the Massachusetts Association of Realtors.

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Springfield, with its many vacant buildings, in the copper theft world is practically what Sutter's Mill was to the California gold rush, Sears said. "Thieves know they are vacant and they target them," he said.

Statistics from the Springfield Police Department seem to bear that out.

In 2007, Springfield police investigated 162 reported incidents of copper theft with a total worth of \$376,000. Police caution this number is an estimate and note that 27 of the 162 reports contained dollar estimates for stolen materials.

The average loss for the 135 that listed a dollar amount was \$2,786, police said.

Some 135 of the incidents occurred in residential properties, and 27 were in commercial or industrial properties, according to police. Three of every four were in vacant buildings, police said.

Palmer has seen several incidents of copper theft over the past year, according to Police Chief Robert P. Frydryk.

Three of them were at a National Grid facility, and two caused outages, he said.

"We've probably had at least six to eight cases where copper was taken from houses that were vacant and for sale," Frydryk said.

All of this is a new phenomenon for the small suburban town. Copper thefts are generally associated with larger communities such as Springfield, Chicopee and Holyoke, he said. "It's been prevalent in the cities - not here."

The rise in thefts parallels the rise in price of copper on the commodities market.

Since August 2003, when the price of pure copper was less than \$1 per pound, the value has shot up dramatically. At its peak in May 2006, the price reached \$4 per pound.

The price has fallen since then, but never below \$2.50 per pound. In late January, the price was around \$3.20 per pound.

The price for scrap copper is generally lower than pure copper straight from the mine. The recent price in Western Massachusetts was around \$2.42 per pound.

Sears said he knows of several properties that were stripped clean of all copper. The cost of repairing the damage for the property owner is "unbelievable," he said.

"Say they get \$400 to \$500 from a scrap dealer," he said. "It costs 10 to 20 times that to get it repaired."

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In addition to buying replacement materials, you have to contract with a plumber and electrician for installation. Then you need to go through the permitting and inspection process with the city, he said.

Houses with a "For Sale" sign out front or an eviction notice on the front door may as well have a bull's-eye, Sears said. A water shut-off notice is even better.

"They don't like it when they get wet stealing the pipes, he said.

Electrical utilities are also being hard hit by the metal thieves.

Officials with Western Massachusetts Electric Co. and National Grid each said their utilities have become more vigilant against copper thefts.

Ken Garber, spokesman for Western Massachusetts Electric, says the company has installed video surveillance systems around their storage yards as a result of wire thefts.

Thieves have taken wire and equipment from the yard, transformer stations, even from company trucks, Garber said.

"People have been known to hop over the fence and pull it right out of our recycle bins," he said.

Taking wiring from a building is a huge risk because a live wire looks just like an uncharged wire until you touch it.

"It seems as if there will be no stop to it until unfortunately someone is electrocuted," Garber said.

Graves said the risk of stealing electrical wire from a utility company is not worth the reward. There are two possible outcomes. One is prosecution, and the other is electrocution, he said.

"You got column A and you got column B," he said.

In recent years, the utility companies have joined together with municipal and state law enforcement, construction companies, the metal industry and anyone else legitimately involved in copper.

The idea is to increase communication about thefts and to watch out for each other, he said.

The arrest in December of two men in Palmer by Monson police was a result of this increased communication, he said. The two men were charged with stealing 100 pounds of copper wire from a National Grid substation in early December. They caused as much as \$100,000 damage and triggered an outage for 4,000 electrical customers, officials said.

Frydryk said copper theft is a crime of opportunity, driven not just by the price of copper, but the willingness of scrap yards to buy scrap basically from all comers.

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"They take what comes in. The people buy it," he said. "They don't care where it comes from."

Robert Kane, of Kane Scrap Iron and Metal in Chicopee, said the family-owned business has seen a lot of people coming in with scrap copper as the price has risen.

The business has no interest in being a fence for stolen merchandise, he said. Anyone who appears suspicious is sent packing, he said.

"We scrutinize people when they come in," he said. "We ask a lot of questions."

Sellers must provide a driver's license, which is copied. "And everyone is on videotape, too," he said.

If someone can't answer where they got the copper, or if they say they found it in their uncle's attic, Kane said it's no deal.

"I don't need the aggravation," he said. "We do enough with legitimate dealers," he said. The scrap yard deals a lot with builders, contractors and plumbers trading in old supplies, he explained.

**Power outage caused by attempted copper theft**

**Associated Press Newswires**

31 January 2008

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (AP) - Authorities say someone attempting to steal copper wire from a power substation caused an outage that left about 2,000 customers in northern Monroe County without power for nearly 90 minutes.

Sheriff's deputies were called to the Hoosier Energy power substation along Indiana 37 north of Bloomington Wednesday evening. They found the padlock cut on the gate to the substation and found small pieces of cut wire and other items inside.

South Central Indiana REMC vice president of operations Phil Mattison says the would-be thief cut a ground wire and may have caused an electrical arc that knocked out power to the area.

Mattison says the thief also may have also suffered a severe burn. Police are looking for suspects.

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**Wire theft causes outages**

**The Republican**

By: Lori Stabile

11 December 2007

PALMER - Police said thieves and vandalism are to blame for weekend power outages that affected parts of Palmer, Monson and south Belchertown.

In the first outage Saturday night, 2,500 National Grid customers lost power. Sunday night, another 1,300 customers were plunged into darkness.

National Grid spokesman David D. Graves said the theft of copper wire from a substation was a "primary factor" in the Saturday outage, which lasted up to four hours in an area including Bondsville and south Belchertown.

Graves would say only that the theft was "extensive" and the thieves were lucky to escape unscathed. "They were very, very fortunate to survive that theft," he said yesterday.

"Tens of thousands of volts of electricity go through a substation," Graves said. Trying to remove any piece of equipment is "foolhardy," he said.

In Tyngsborough in March, two men were electrocuted when they cut a high-voltage wire at a vacant factory.

Graves said copper theft is "rampant," with reports around the state and country of thieves targeting anything that may contain copper, from abandoned buildings and homes under construction to electric company substations.

Police Chief Robert P. Frydryk said this isn't the first local copper theft. A Fuller Road substation was targeted several times, and copper plumbing was stolen from a vacant house and a former hardware store in Three Rivers.

The price of copper has more than doubled in the last two years, to about \$3 a pound. "There's a market . . . scrap yards buy it," Frydryk said.

Graves said an employee doing maintenance Saturday noticed copper had been stolen from a Palmer substation, requiring extensive repairs. Transformers are grounded with copper wire. Thieves cut it near the transformer, then rip it from the ground, he said.

When ground wire is ripped out, "an unstable situation" is created, Graves said, and bolts of electricity - like bolts of lightning - can flash through the air to ground or between pieces of equipment.

"People who do this, you have to wonder what's going on in their minds," he said.

Sunday's outage, reported at 9:50 p.m., was caused when someone cut a ground wire, also

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affecting Monson customers, Graves said. Power was restored by midnight, he said.

Graves said the utility's vice president of security has contacted police departments on ways to stop the copper thefts. Increased surveillance has been discussed, he said.

**Copper Thieves Cause Power Outage, Damage at Houston Library**  
**Library Journal.com**

By Jennifer Pinkowski  
5 December 2007

The Houston Public Library is the latest victim of the spate of copper theft that has spread across the United States in the last two years. On December 3, staff at the Julia Ideson Building, which houses the Houston Metropolitan Research Center and is the temporary location of the downtown Central Library's reference and circulation services as that library undergoes a renovation, discovered that thieves had cut the wiring leading to the generator and emergency panel. The library lost power to the elevator, emergency lighting for the staircases, and the fire alarm, according to the Houston Chronicle. The library was shut down for the day. Damages are estimated to be as much as \$25,000.

Copper is very attractive to thieves, as a building boom in Asia has boosted the price of the commodity about 400 percent in the last few years. Along with other public facilities like power stations and schools, libraries nationwide have been victims of copper thieves, who score an amount of metal that is worth a fraction of the damage they cause. The copper is often sold at recycling plants to fund the thieves' drug habits, law enforcement officials say. Many states are considering legislation to combat the phenomenon, including punishing recycling facilities for buying stolen metal and making copper theft a felony.

**Man questioned as failed copper theft knocks out power Possible suspect quizzed in failed copper theft; SUBSTATION DAMAGE CUTS ELECTRICITY TO 5,800**  
**The Lexington Herald Leader**

By: Ashlee Clark  
11 October 2007

Lexington police are questioning a potential suspect in a failed copper wire theft that left 5,800 customers without power yesterday morning.

The man appeared at an area hospital yesterday with "injuries that would be consistent" with an attempt to steal copper, said Lt. Douglas Pape, a duty commander with the Lexington police.

In the past two years, copper wire has become a hot commodity for thieves trying to cash in on the rising value of the material, Kentucky Utilities spokesman Cliff Feltham said. Copper can bring up to \$3 a pound at scrap yards, according to the Copper Development Association, a trade group.

But some have died in the pursuit of stolen copper used in electrical wiring.

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"The price is driving up the demand, and it's causing folks to go out there and do things they wouldn't normally do," said Lt. Phil Crumpton, a Kentucky State Police spokesman.

In August, a Kentucky Utilities employee in Harlan County found the body of a man who appeared to have been electrocuted while attempting to take copper wire. In June, a Kentucky man was electrocuted in a similar case in Vulean, W.Va.

Across the country and around the world, people are stealing urns or taking copper from traffic signals and church domes. Some have resorted to stealing other metals -- cast-iron manhole covers, aluminum gutters from houses or bleachers from stadiums.

Yesterday's attempted copper theft occurred at a Kentucky Utilities electrical substation off Waveland Museum Lane. Several tools left at the scene indicated that someone had broken in and tried to disassemble some parts to get to the copper wire, but nothing was taken, Pape said.

Something probably blew up in the thief's face to make him stop, Pape said.

"He's lucky to be alive," Pape said. "They've had a few die doing what this guy is doing."

The botched theft caused a power outage that lasted from 4:40 a.m. to 7 a.m. yesterday. Those affected were in the area between Nicholasville and Clays Mill roads from the Fayette-Jessamine county line to Tiverton Way.

Kentucky Utilities has increased security around its 400 substations recently to thwart copper theft. But "somebody that's intent on doing it will find a way to get into the substation and find a way to steal the copper," Feltham said.

Unfortunately for thieves, KU has been changing its solid copper connections to copper weld, a combination of compounds that is worth considerably less than pure copper, Feltham said.

Sgt. Guy Greene, who handles commercial burglaries for the Lexington police, said he gets weekly reports of copper thefts. People have taken copper from homes under construction or renovation, utility areas and air conditioners.

"You name it, wherever copper is, they're trying to steal it," Greene said.

They then take the copper to salvage yards, where it is sold and can be shipped off by the next day, Crumpton said. The speed of the often-anonymous transactions makes it difficult for police to track those selling the illegal wire.

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**Copper theft causes outages**  
**Topeka Capital-Journal**  
6 October 2007

Approximately 4,000 Westar Energy customers were without power Friday afternoon after an overnight copper theft created a safety hazard requiring immediate repairs.

Highland Park High School and Scott Elementary were affected by the outage, said Ron Harbaugh, spokesman for Topeka Unified School District 501, but classes continued throughout the day.

Thieves stole an undisclosed amount of copper from a Westar substation Thursday night, and when discovered, company officials had to bring the power down while repairs took place, said Gina Penzig, Westar spokeswoman.

The lights went out in southeast Topeka at 12:30 p.m. Friday and were turned back on at around 3:15 p.m., Penzig said.

School officials weren't informed before Westar shut off power because the utility needed to act quickly.

"It was a safety issue that we considered an emergency situation," Penzig said.

She stressed how dangerous dealing with power stations can be for trained employees, much less thieves tinkering with copper wiring.

**Copper wire thieves cause power outage**  
**Topeka Capital Journal**  
By Tim Hrenchir  
20 July 2006

Someone stealing copper wire from an electrical substation caused a power outage that affected about 2,650 homes and businesses today in North Topeka as the city sizzled under temperatures near the century mark, officials said.

The power failure meant a loss of air conditioning that lasted almost two hours at the Topeka Rescue Mission, which set a record this week for the number of homeless people it houses.

The outage was in progress throughout much of North Topeka as the National Weather Service officer near Philip Billard Municipal Airport at 2 p.m. recorded a temperature of 102 degrees and heat index of 108.

Westar spokeswoman Karla Olsen said the outage began at about 12:30 p.m. at an electrical substation. Topeka police spokeswoman Kristi Pankratz said officers were called at about 1 p.m. to the substation at N.W. Tyler and St. John, where they made no

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arrests but took a report indicating property was damaged and copper wire stolen.

Olsen warned the public that it is "incredibly dangerous" for anyone to enter an substation and try to cut out copper wiring.

"The person or people who did this are lucky that they didn't hurt themselves or worse, not to mention that they cut power to thousands of customers in temperatures of 100-plus degrees," she said.

Olsen said today's outage affected areas ranging from the Kansas River on the south to N.W. Button Road on the west, N. US-24 highway on the north and N.E. Meriden Road on the east.

The outage forced Topeka police to stand in the intersections direct traffic at various North Topeka crossings where traffic lights had stopped working.

Power was returned by 1:10 p.m. to about 1,800 of the homes and businesses that were affected, Olsen said.

She said power was then restored by 2:29 p.m. to the rest of those affected. The latter group included the Topeka Rescue Mission shelter at 600 N. Kansas Ave. and its Hope Center, which houses women and families across the street from that shelter at 116 N.E. Curtis.

Rescue Mission executive director Barry Feaker said a record 253 people stayed Tuesday evening at the mission's two shelters, which can comfortably accommodate about 200.

He added that those shelters on Wednesday evening housed 250 people, including 70 children, which is at or near a record.

Feaker said the power outage began at a time when mission residents were finishing lunch and most of the children were away at an event involving Topeka Unified School District 501.

Feaker expressed appreciation that WIBW radio employees brought an electrical generator and fans to the mission during the outage, while other Topekans came with gifts of food and bottled water. He said mission residents and staff felt grateful that the outage didn't last very long.

Today was Topeka's fourth day out of five in which temperatures reached the century mark. Before this week, Topeka hadn't recorded a 100-degree day since August 2003, when temperatures hit that level on 10 days over an 11-day period.