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## Eules police make arrest in stolen tailgate case

Apparently tailgates aren't just for parties anymore.

A 20-year-old Rowlett man was arrested Thursday after he tried to sell an undercover Eules police officer a stolen tailgate that he'd advertised on Craigslist, police say.

Lt. Eric Starnes said Friday that investigators have been aggressively going after tailgate thieves after a rash of 22 such thefts in the city since around Christmas.

"These guys, if they're good, it takes 15, 20, 30 seconds top to get one of these tailgates and they're gone," Starnes said.

Starnes said the tailgates can sell for roughly \$200 and can be difficult to prove stolen.

"Tailgates don't have the VIN number on them. There's not identifying marks on them so even if we come across 10 tailgates, we can't prove that they're stolen because we don't have a number to say, 'Yep, that's a stolen tailgate.'"

He said investigators are trying to determine whether the thieves are simply selling the tailgates through ads like Craigslist, or may have buyers in body shops and scrap metal businesses.

In the recent investigation, the undercover officer had been in negotiations with Zachary Holt after responding to his Craigslist ad and made plans to meet the man at a fast-food restaurant parking lot for the purchase. Holt brought a 16-year-old male juvenile with them to the meeting, who admitted in a conversation with the undercover office that the tailgate had been stolen out of Rowlett, Starnes said.

Holt was arrested on unrelated traffic violations. He subsequently admitted to investigators that he had been delivering a stolen tailgate to the potential buyer and now faces a theft charge out of Rowlett, Starnes said.

Holt was released from the Eules jail Friday morning, jail officials said.

The juvenile was released to the custody of a parent and later led investigators to the Rowlett home of another juvenile, which was being used to store about three other stolen tailgates, Starnes said.

Rowlett police were alerted and will seek any theft charges stemming from the discovery, Starnes said.

Starnes said Eules police are continuing their investigation into whether Holt may be responsible for any of their city's tailgate thefts.

"We're not done with Holt. We're not done looking at other avenues where these things could end up," Starnes said.

Starnes said the severity of charges faces can vary depending on the value of the tailgate. Some tailgates, he said, include rear-view cameras which increase the tailgate's value.

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PAGE 2 OF 2

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Vehicle owners are encouraged to lock their tailgates, purchase locks for tailgates that don't have one, and remove valuable from their trucks. Starnes said neighbors should also be watching out for each other, reporting to police if they see someone lurking around the neighborhood.

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## Tailgate Trafficking Suspect Arrested In Euless

January 11, 2013 10:42 AM



Zachary Holt (credit: Euless Police Department)

**EULESS (CBSDFW.COM)** - Police in Euless on Thursday arrested a 20-year-old man suspected of trafficking stolen truck tailgates. According to police, the suspect — identified as Zachary Holt — inadvertently arranged a meeting with investigators. He showed up to the meeting with a juvenile male.

While talking to investigators, the juvenile admitted that the tailgate was stolen in Rowlett.

Holt was arrested for unrelated traffic violations. Later, at the police station, he said that he was delivering the stolen tailgate to a buyer. The Euless Police Department is still investigating further details about the case.

Meanwhile, the juvenile was released to a parent. Together, they led investigators to a storage facility located in Rowlett that contained several other truck tailgates that had been reported as stolen. Officials with the Rowlett Police Department assisted Euless investigators in recovering these items.

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PAGE 1 OF 1

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## Thieves Find Easy Marks At Euless Dog Park

January 21, 2013 5:53 PM

**EULESS (CBSDFW.COM)** – Visitors to the Bear Creek Dog Park are returning to their cars to find an unpleasant surprise.

According to police reports, there have been seven car break-ins in the parking lot across from the dog park, just off 360 and 183 in Euless, in the last five weeks.

All the reported break-ins occurred on Sundays, which is one of the busiest days at the park.

One of the latest victims, Maria Bonkowski, brings her dog Monty to the dog park several times a week. When she returned to her car last Sunday, she found glass scattered everywhere.

“My window had been smashed in and my purse was taken,” said Bonkowski.

She also noticed that the thieves took off with valuables from two other cars.

“You feel invaded. You feel violated. It’s what people have taken from us,” she described. “The trust, the feeling of security in your neighborhood, and your community.”

Nearly all of the victims, including Bonkowski, made the crucial mistake of leaving a purse or bag in plain view. She admits she should have known better. But she questions why police haven’t alerted residents about the rash of recent break-ins.

“I was just as mad at myself. But, on the other hand, we should have been notified. Everyone who comes to this park should be aware that something is going on at this park.”