

## Arrests in Business Break-Ins in Watauga, Johnson Counties

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In a joint investigation of the Watauga County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Unit and the Johnson County Tennessee Sheriff's Office, two Mountain City men have been charged in area break-ins. On December 12th, the Watauga County Sheriff's Office received a report from High Country Recycling at 6400 US Highway 421 North, Vilas, High Country Recycling reporting that suspects stole about \$300.00 in miscellaneous scrap metal and copper. On December 20th, the Watauga County Sheriff's Office received a report of Breaking and Entering and Larceny at Ward's Automotive located at 134 Willowdale Church Road, Vilas, NC. Ward's Automotive reported that \$150.00 in cash, vehicle radiators, aluminum wheels, a Diagnostic Car Scanner, a computer and a 1999 Ford F150 were taken from the business. Then, on Christmas Day last month, the Johnson County Sheriff's Office received information from the Watauga County Sheriff's Office on their investigation, leading Johnson County investigators to find in Johnson County the 1999 Ford F150 taken from Ward's Automotive, and two suspects were arrested by the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Hagaman reported that the Watauga County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Unit joined the Johnson County Tennessee Sheriff's Office in the investigation into the reported incidents. Christmas Day, the Johnson County Sheriff's Office, received information from Watauga County investigators and conducted their investigation in Mountain City, Tennessee. As a result, the Johnson County Sheriff's Office arrested two suspects for similar crimes there. The two suspects were interviewed by the Watauga County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Unit while the 1999 Ford F150 and the Diagnostic Car Scanner taken in the break-in were recovered and returned to Ward's Automotive. The investigations led to charges against Kevin Mark Buchanan, 42, of 3933 421 South, Mountain City, Tennessee, and Jacob Ray Rash, 22, of 828 Drakes Creek, Mountain City, Tennessee, each charged with one count each of felony breaking and entering, one count of felony larceny and one count of felony larceny of a motor vehicle. Both remain in the custody of the Johnson County Sheriff's Office pending extradition to North Carolina with court set for January 24th.