



Department of Justice

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ALTOONA MAN SENTENCED FOR CONSPIRACY TO STEAL MERCHANDISE FROM WAREHOUSE

Madison, Wis. - John W. Vaudreuil, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Branden Kortness, 28, Altoona, Wis., was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 16 months in prison for conspiring to steal more than \$1,000 in merchandise that was moving in interstate commerce. Kortness pled guilty to this crime on August 16, 2010. This sentence will be served without the possibility of parole. The court also directed Kortness to pay \$46,890 in restitution.

Kortness was part of a group that included Michael Dayton, 29, William Lund, 26, both of Altoona, and Deedra Ulry 21, Chippewa Falls, Wis., who stole U.S. mail and other merchandise from the Straight Shot Express warehouse in Eau Claire, Wis.

Kortness, the former Straight Shot Express warehouse night manager, allowed Dayton, Lund, and Ulry to join him on the loading dock at night to rifle pallets and to steal packages therein. The group concentrated on collectible coins and electronics, including computers, digital cameras, and GPS units.

Michael Dayton was also sentenced to 16 months in prison for his role in the offense. Deedra Ulry and William Lund each received a sentence of three years of probation. All the co-defendants were ordered to pay restitution for stolen merchandise.

The guilty pleas and convictions were the result of an investigation conducted by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Eau Claire Police Department and Altoona Police Department. The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy M. O'Shea.

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