

Church of God Burglary

Between the dates of September 19 through November 25, 2011, the Echols County Sheriff's Office was conducting an investigation after receiving complaints that the Church of God in Statenville was being burglarized on numerous occasions. The offenders would break in to the church, and steal money from the secretary's office. On one occasion the offenders stole a Dell laptop computer valued at over \$500.00. The Echols County Sheriff's Office set up video surveillance at the church in an attempt to catch the offenders in the act. After several attempts, the offenders were caught on video going through the church office and stealing money. The total amount of money taken was in excess of over \$183.00 during the course of the burglaries. Through the assistance from the community, the offenders were identified as William Lee Thornton, age 17 and Joshua Israel Connell, age 18, both of Statenville. A search warrant was executed at the 100 block of Baptist Church Street, where both individuals resided. Deputies recovered the stolen Dell laptop computer from a bedroom inside the residence. After being confronted with the evidence, both individuals admitted to the burglaries at the Church of God. Both individuals were arrested and charged with seven counts of felony burglary and one count of felony possession of tools for commission of a crime. Thornton and Connell were transported to the Lowndes County Jail for processing