



State of Wisconsin ● DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

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ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO ENFORCEMENT UNIT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two Men Arrested For Illegal Manufacturing And Cigarette Tax Evasion

Ronald Runkles Jr., 42, of Pleasant Prairie, and Thomas Banner, 46, of Trevor, were arrested August 27 at their retail cigarette licensed premises in Burlington for manufacturing cigarettes without a permit, cigarette tax evasion, and unlawful possession of cigarettes.

The Department of Revenue's (DOR) Alcohol and Tobacco Unit earlier received a complaint that the store was selling "rolled" cigarettes without a permit and did not collect required excise tax. Under Wisconsin law, manufacturing cigarettes requires a state permit and each pack is subject to an excise tax of \$2.52 per pack.

Three search warrants were served simultaneously at Runkles' and Banner's residences and at their retail store. Agents from DOR recovered two commercial "roll your own" cigarette machines and numerous products used to manufacture cigarettes. DOR also recovered 16 cartons of rolled cigarettes that were at the retail store awaiting customer pick up.

The criminal charges are the result of a joint investigation by DOR's Alcohol and Tobacco Unit, the Burlington and Pleasant Prairie Police Departments, and the Kenosha County Sheriff.

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