

Monday, March 30, 2009

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Hartford man gets 30-year sentence

Multiple felony theft charges connected to motorcycle business

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A former Wiregrass businessman was sentenced to 30 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to multiple felony theft charges and several alcohol violations.

According to a statement from Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams, Circuit Court Judge P.B. McLauchlin Jr. handed down the sentence last week against Donald Lashley.

Authorities arrested Lashley, 35, in December 2008, after they seized more than three gallons of moonshine and numerous bottles of whiskey from inside his business called Wiregrass Choppers. Geneva County Sheriff Greg Ward previously released information that Lashley had set up a bar and dance pole in the back of the motorcycle business located near downtown Hartford. The alcohol seizure led to an ongoing investigation, which resulted in several theft charges.

The statement said Lashley pleaded guilty Wednesday to four felony counts of first-degree theft by deception and four misdemeanor counts of third-degree theft by deception, possession of moonshine and another alcohol violation. Judge McLauchlin sentenced Lashley to 30 years in prison for the felony charges and a year in jail for the misdemeanor charges.

According to the statement, Lashley was released on parole in 2008 from a 20-year prison sentence for theft charges regarding a 2001 fraudulent business scheme in Geneva. He had served about six years in prison. The statement said the theft charges included a fraud and deception of several employees of Wiregrass Choppers.

"Unfortunately, by law, he will be eligible for parole in 10 years, but I assure the citizens of Geneva County that we will do everything possible to keep him in prison, and serve his full sentence." Adams said in the statement. "He is a true con man."