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# DOTHAN EAGLE



## Business owner faces multiple felony charges

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Geneva County Sheriff's investigators charged the owner of a motorcycle business in Hartford with stealing more than \$8,000 while he operated his business.

Investigator Ben Berry arrested Donald Lashley, 34, of Hartford, Wednesday evening and charged him with two felony counts of first-degree theft by deception. Lashley, the owner of Wiregrass Chopper, was originally arrested Tuesday evening after authorities seized more than three gallons of moonshine, along with what Sheriff Greg Ward described as case after case of beer and numerous bottles of whiskey from inside the business.

Investigators charged Lashley with felony possession of manufactured alcohol, the moonshine and

### Can you help?

Anyone with info about the Wiregrass Chopper business can call the Geneva County Sheriff's Office at 694-5660.

misdemeanor violation of the prohibition law for all the beer and whiskey. Lashley is being held in the Geneva County Jail without bail on a parole violation.

"They had a full-fledged oak bar that had just been built with three and a half gallons of moonshine," Ward said. "Over in the corner, they had a dance pole with some mirrors."

Deputies seized the illegal alcohol at Wiregrass Chopper, a motorcycle store located on Alabama Highway 52, about half a block

See **FELONY, 2A**

## Felony

*continued from 1A*

off the town square in downtown Hartford. Ward said investigators found the illegal alcohol in a room concealed behind a door past the purchase counter inside the business.

Berry said investigators seized several computers and a digital camera from inside the busi-

ness, and first learned of the backroom setup after a customer reported it to law enforcement.

"Mr. Lashley told us he was attempting to start a charter group of the Hells Angels," Berry said.

Berry said the investigation into the operation of the business continued late Wednesday and resulted in the theft charges. Berry said Lashley sold two motorcycles to a couple, including a 2005 Honda motorcycle and a 2008 Harley David-

son Police Special, for a combined \$8,500 without delivering the motorcycles. He said the couple made two separate payments and never received their merchandise.

The Geneva County Sheriff's Office was assisted by the Hartford Police Department and agents with the Alabama Alcohol Beverage Control. More charges could be filed pending the completion of the investigation.

Assistant Geneva Coun-

ty District Attorney Stephen Smith said Lashley was released from prison in February after serving five years on other unrelated theft by deception convictions. He said the previous charges stemmed from a Geneva business he owned called Chaos Crib during which he bought property for the business without making payment for it.

Smith said Lashley has also previously been convicted of 18 felony counts of forgery in Georgia.