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Nine People Indicted In Connection To Theft from Three Bears Store

(PALMER, Alaska) – A Palmer Grand Jury indicted nine individuals Thursday on felony charges stemming from the theft of 38 firearms from the Three Bears store along the Palmer-Wasilla Highway in Wasilla on Sept. 18, 2011. The indictment is a result of a joint investigation by the Alaska State Troopers B Detachment Patrol, Alaska Bureau of Investigation (ABI), Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit (SDEU), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the Palmer Police Department. Defendants are Wasilla residents 30-year-old Amber Helmann and 18-year-old Christopher Everly; Palmer residents 19-year-old John Stern, 19-year-old Mitchell Cupp, 24-year-old Joseph Price and 18-year-old Joseph Owens as well as Laurie Plyler, 24, of Eagle River and Kevin Angel, 29, of Chugiak. A 16-year-old Palmer boy was also involved in the case and is being charged as a juvenile. All nine face a variety of charges to include first- and second-degree burglary, second-degree theft and second-degree theft by receiving. Any charges reported are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The majority of the firearms stolen from the store have been recovered. Joint efforts by state, federal, and local authorities are underway to recover all the stolen firearms.

The ATF announced a \$2,500 reward will be offered for information leading to the recovery of the stolen firearms as well as the arrest and conviction of the individuals responsible for the theft of firearms.

Anyone with information on the crime should contact the Alaska State Troopers at (907)352-5401 or call the ATF's toll-free, 24-hour tip line at 1-800-ATF-GUNS (800-283-4867), the ATF Anchorage Alaska Field Office at (907)271-5701 or Crime-stoppers at (907)745-3333.