

KSTP .COM — **5** **EYEWITNESS NEWS****10 People Charged in Auto Theft Ring**

Updated: 08/17/2011 6:44 PM KSTP.com By: Leslie Rolander



The Ramsey County attorney says a three-month investigation by St. Paul police into an auto theft ring has resulted in charges against 10 people.

Police say the 10 stole 50 vehicles between January and June and sold them for scrap metal. Officer John Keating says metal from one vehicle alone can generate \$300 to \$350.

Those charged include 32-year-old Michael Thomas O'Brien; 30-year-old Gerald Edward O'Brien; 47-year-old Jeffrey Michael Smith; 28-year-old Matthew Bruce Williams; 40-year-old Lionel Warner; 33-year-old Brandon Carl Heinl; 48-year-old Julie Katherine Rubbelke; 45-year-old Gary John Gomez; 45-year-old Hugo Velasquez; and 23-year-old Hugo Velasquez-Guzman.

Ramsey County Attorney John Choi is urging state legislators to improve the regulation of the scrap metal industry. Choi recommends the state require title or proof of ownership before cars can be sold for scrap.

He also suggests a 30-day waiting period before cars can be salvaged.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.