

Ex-Valley Packaging workers arrested in diaper theft

Ethan Safran and Alison Dirr , Post Crescent Published 10:27 a.m. CT March 7, 2017 | Updated 11:44 a.m. CT March 7, 2017

FOX CROSSING - Police disclosed Tuesday that two former Valley Packaging Industries employees are facing charges in connection with the theft of 100,000 diapers from the Fox Cities Diaper Bank.

Police arrested Jason Havel, a 42-year-old Appleton resident who was a shipping manager for VPI. He has been fired from the company. Police also arrested John Forbes, a 52-year-old Neenah resident who was formerly employed by VPI.

Investigators are recommending charges of felony theft for both men, it was announced at Tuesday's press conference at the Fox Crossing Police Department. The men have yet to be charged and are being held in the Winnebago County Jail.

Several thefts occurred between Jan. 3 and Feb. 13 at a warehouse on Valley Road in Fox Crossing. Police said 1,777 cases of diapers, valued at \$45,000, were stolen.



Figure 1: Jason Havel (Photo: Courtesy of the Winnebago County Jail)

"It appears that it was a theft of opportunity to make some cash," said Fox Crossing Police Lt. Scott Blashka.

It is unknown how much money the suspects received from the thefts. Blashka said the suspects stole diapers by individual cases and full pallets. He declined to specify what kind of equipment was used in the thefts.

A tip led investigators to diapers at a location in Ashwaubenon, and another tip led to a suspicious incident call at the Valley Road warehouse in early February. The tips led to a VPI employee and several other unrelated thefts.

The two men were taken into custody Friday evening. Investigators recovered eight pallets of diapers and hygiene products last weekend.

"It's good news. It's a job well-done," said Fox Crossing Police Chief Tim Seaver. "Hopefully we can continue to follow up on any leads."

United Way Fox Cities, which operates the diaper bank, was in the process of moving the diaper bank to VPI's Kensington Drive facility when the thefts took place, according to Peter Kelly, president and chief executive officer of United Way Fox Cities.

"Our challenge is to make sure we have diapers throughout the year to help the families that need them most," Kelly said.



Figure 2: John Forbes (Photo: Courtesy of the Winnebago County Jail)

The diaper bank provides diapers to 875 babies from low-income families every month. The program supplied 300,000 diapers to babies in the Fox Cities in 2016.

After news of the theft broke, Amazon donated 100,000 diapers and 200,000 wipes. Kimberly-Clark Corp. also pledged 100,000 diapers to the diaper bank, which are expected to arrive this week.

In addition to donations from corporations, civic groups, churches and individuals, the diaper bank gets major assistance from Dollars for Diapers, a fundraiser launched by The Post-Crescent and supported heavily by Kimberly-Clark Corp.

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