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Vandals strike residential, farm and church property



Some of the damage done on Rock Sink Baptist Church and one side of one van is shown here.

Photos provided by the Dixie County Sheriff's Office.

**By Jeff M. Hardison ©
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p.m.**

people of Dixie County to find and arrest vandals and thieves who struck mailbox owners, farmers and Christians in northern Dixie County, according to information released by DCSO

DIXIE COUNTY -- The Dixie County Sheriff's Office is seeking the help of the

Maj. Scott Harden.

Several acts of vandalism had been reported on Wednesday (Jan. 2), Harden said.

Farmers had to replace tires that had been slashed on different equipment, Harden said.

Vandals went through the county damaging and even burning street-side mailboxes, Harden said.

Mailboxes are protected by federal law, and crimes against them and the mail they contain are considered a federal offense.

Violators can be fined up to \$250,000 or imprisoned

for up to three years for each act of vandalism against a mailbox, according to federal law.

Damaged mailboxes have to be replaced, costing the owner time, money and inconvenience. Meanwhile, the mail cannot be delivered. Many people depend on receiving monthly checks and other financial support through the mail; so, doing without their mail negatively affects their lives. And some damaged mail cannot be replaced – family photos, letters from sons and daughters serving in the military overseas, and other priceless keepsakes that mean so much to the recipient, the United States Postal Service has noted.

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Also reported during this spree was damage to a local church, he added.

Rock Sink Baptist Church reported damage to buildings and church vans, Harden said. Some of the damage at the church included the church vans' tires being cut, he said.

The vandals are also thieves, he added, because they stole fuels from at least one of the vans. Other damage at the church included the vans and church walls being spray painted with graffiti, Harden said.

By late Wednesday afternoon most of the painted surfaces at the church had been cleaned or repainted by church staff and members of the congregation, Harden said.

DCSO investigators were in the area again Thursday (Jan. 3) interviewing residents as the law enforcement officers attempt to identify suspects involved in the incident.

Anyone with any information regarding the damage in this area or the damage to the Rock Sink Baptist Church, is asked to call the Dixie County Sheriff's Office at 352-498-1245. Any vandal or thief who wants to voluntarily surrender can call the same telephone number.