



March 12, 2020

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Weld County Sheriff's Office deputies recover \$120,000 backhoe

Weld County Sheriff's Office deputies, including members of the Strike Team and K9, recovered Wednesday a stolen backhoe with an estimated value of \$120,000.

About 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, deputy Donovan Pecorella responded to Aims Community College in Fort Lupton on a report of a cold theft. The caller reported his John Deere backhoe had been stolen overnight.

The owner told deputies the backhoe is equipped with a GPS tracker. Pecorella and the owner tracked the vehicle to 5402 Weld County Road 23. While en route, the GPS tracker showed the vehicle was inside a building on the property.

But by the time deputies arrived at the scene, the backhoe had been moved off the property and onto an access road. The vehicle had been stripped of its license plate and all identifying markings.

Deputies called the property owner, Ramon Ramirez, who claimed he found the backhoe on the side of the road Tuesday night and moved it to his shop. He told deputies he assumed the owner would be looking for it, so he moved it back out onto the road before leaving Wednesday morning for Denver. Ramirez also claimed he called Weld County Dispatch Tuesday night to report he had found the backhoe, but no record of that call exists.

Deputies sought and were granted a search warrant for Ramirez's property. Det. Jeff Meadows, deputy Brian Fortin and K9 Loki responded to help with the search. The backhoe's license plate was discovered in a burn pit inside the fenced property.

Ramirez returned to the property from Denver while deputies were still on scene. He was arrested on suspicion of first-degree aggravated motor vehicle theft, a Class 3 felony.



Deputies continued to process the scene into late Wednesday afternoon to determine if evidence of additional criminal activity exists on the property. The investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information regarding this or any other crime is asked to call the Weld County Sheriff's Office at (970) 356-4015 or Northern Colorado Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-TIPS (8477)**. **Tips can also be submitted through the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimeshurt.com. Those submitting tips through Crime Stoppers that lead to the arrest and filing of charges on a suspect(s) may be eligible for a cash reward.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Reams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Reams – Sheriff