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## Copper Theft Ring Busted After Benicia Police Chase Ends in Four Arrests

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Authorities confirmed that four people are now in custody after a copper theft in Benicia escalated into a multi-city police pursuit that ended in San Pablo. The group is accused of stealing copper cable and causing more than \$5,000 in property damage in the city's industrial district.

According to the Benicia Police Department (BPD), the incident unfolded early morning when an officer spotted two men loading large bundles of copper wiring into a U-Haul near

East Second Street. As police approached the scene, both the U-Haul and a second vehicle sped off in separate directions, prompting officers to initiate a pursuit.

## Quick Pursuit

The U-Haul led officers out of Benicia and into San Pablo, roughly 30 miles away. Once there, two men jumped from the moving truck and attempted to flee on foot. Officers from the San Pablo Police Department (SPPD) quickly responded and detained both suspects following a short chase.

Back in Benicia, the second vehicle was located and stopped in the 1900 block of East Second Street. A woman inside the car was taken into custody. Shortly after, a fourth suspect, who had been hiding near the original theft site, was discovered and arrested.

All four suspects are now facing a range of charges. Tiffany Cochran, 30, was booked for conspiracy and possession of burglary tools. Robert Schlitz, 32, and Alvarado Ramirez, 36, were arrested for grand theft of copper, conspiracy, and possession of a controlled substance. Antonio Ramirez, 46, was taken into custody for conspiracy and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Police say the damage caused by the group's theft extended beyond the value of the copper itself, with vandalism impacting local infrastructure and businesses.

The rise in copper theft has become a growing concern in many areas, as the metal can fetch high prices on the black market. Often taken from industrial sites, construction zones, and public utilities, stolen copper can disrupt services and lead to costly repairs.

Authorities praised the teamwork between departments that led to the swift arrests. "This was a great example of interagency cooperation that resulted in the suspects being captured before further damage could be done," a Benicia Police spokesperson said.

All four suspects remain in custody while the Solano County District Attorney's Office reviews the charges. Investigators are still working to determine if the group is connected to other recent copper thefts in the region.

No injuries were reported during the chase or arrests. Police are asking anyone with information about suspicious activity in the East Second Street area to come forward, as the investigation is still active.

