**After More Than 13 Years RISSProp Success Continues - Are the Pawn Shops,**

**Scrap Yards & Second Hand Dealers In Your Town Reporting**

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**Overview**

In 2006, NESPIN and several Central Massachusetts area detectives partnered together to bring pawn shop reporting out of the “paper record keeping era” and into the “computer age” by developing a Pawn Shop Database. The project’s goal was to have the transaction records of ten pawn shops posted on line so that area police officers could view the shops’ records from their desktops. This on-line system would eliminate the need for officers to physically visit each shop or sort through mountains of paper records submitted to the local department when searching for a specific item. The Pawn Shop Database was designed to provide quick access to the pawn shops’ records while saving officers substantial time.

Thirteen years later, the Pawn Shop Database is now known as RISSProp (RISS Property Tracking and Recovery System). Over the last thirteen years the system has grown substantially. It now contains transactions from approximately 2,400 pawn shops, and the database contains approximately 19.5 million records. As impressive as the growth of the system might be, equally impressive is the number of cases that RISSProp has played an essential role in solving, and the value of property that has been recovered. The success rate of the RISSProp system shows no signs of slowing down, as officers from across New England send NESPIN success stories several times a week.

**Some Success Stories, Thanks to RISSProp**

Since its inception, RISSProp has been credited with at least $6.8 million in recovered property and criminal charges being filed against over 800 individuals. This is a conservative number based solely upon reports submitted by NESPIN member agencies. If an agency has solved an investigation using RISSProp but does not share that information, NESPIN has no way of knowing about it. Listed below are a small sampling of some recent RISSProp successes:

* In October 2018, the Barnstable, MA Police Department opened multiple investigations into residential house breaks. The common denominator in the residential breaks was that the victims were attending funeral services for their loved ones when their homes were broken into. Through their investigations, Barnstable detectives developed a lead on a suspect. A Barnstable police detective queried the suspect’s name in the RISSProp database and found that he had pawned a number of items consistent with items reportedly stolen from several house breaks. The Barnstable detectives contacted the suspect who agreed to an interview & interrogation session. The suspect subsequently confessed to the fact that he would look up obituaries and then find relatives who would be attending the funeral and target their homes. The suspect was arrested and charged for his crimes. The Barnstable police credit RISSProp with solving six residential house breaks. “We credit RISSProp with helping us solve six residential house breaks” ~ Det. Lena Bevilacqua
* A detective with the South Portland, Maine Police Department was investigating a case of misuse of a stolen credit card. He had some retail store video of the suspect but was unable to identify the individual. An informant subsequently provided him a street name of the suspect, a narcotics agent was able to provide a formal name to the street name and the detective then ran the suspect's name in RISSProp. He got a hit from a pawnshop transaction in Massachusetts, which included a photo of the suspect in the shop. The detective then used that photo to confirm the identity of the suspect, which allowed him to secure an arrest warrant. Charges are pending.

In January 2019, NESPIN began cross referencing NCIC stolen article file serial numbers against RISSProp transaction data. A match was detected on an Apple MacBook Pro that was reported stolen from a residential burglary in Stratford, CT on December 29, 2018. On January 15, 2019 this same item was sold at a Bridgeport, CT pawn shop and detectives were able to positively identity the seller using RISSProp data. Criminal charges are expected as this investigation moves forward.

**How Does Nespin Collect the Pawn Shop Data?**

NESPIN works with cities and towns by providing them with sample Pawn Shop ordinances that can be enacted by a city or town which requires pawn shops, second hand dealers, consignment shops and scrap yards to report their transactions to NESPIN. Once the city ordinance or town by-law has been enacted (i.e. passed), NESPIN personnel install software that uploads pawn shop transactions, etc. at the business required to report their purchases to the police. The data is then posted on the RISSProp website for police to review. This data can include photographs of the items, the individual selling the items, and their identification presented at the time of sale.

**Cost of the System**

In an era of strained municipal budgets and manpower constraints, NESPIN is routinely asked by police agencies what is the cost for law enforcement agencies to use the RISSProp system. The answer is that access to the system is available completely free of charge for all NESPIN member agencies as well as participating shops.

**Is Your Agency Using RISSProp To Its Fullest Extent?**

Most police agencies in Massachusetts and New England routinely check the RISSProp system as part of criminal investigations. It is important to remember that the system is only as good as the data that it takes in and makes available to investigators. While many communities have town by-laws or city ordinances that require the pawn shop, second hand stores, consignment shops, and scrap yards to report their transactions to NESPIN, there are still some communities that do not. NESPIN is actively seeking to partner with any law enforcement agency looking to implement a pawn shop reporting ordinance. NESPIN can provide sample ordinances, and once passed, NESPIN personnel will install the software that uploads the transaction records and train both investigators and shop employees, all free of charge to the police department and the stores that are required to report.

**Knowledge Is Power – Your Department Can Help**

Knowledge is power and the more information (transaction records) that RISSProp collects, the more cases it can solve. Help the RISSProp system expand even more. If your community does not have a by-law/city ordinance requiring pawn shops etc., to report their transactions to the police and you would like to enact one, or you have shops that need to be connected to RISSProp please reach out to your NESPIN Law Enforcement Coordinator listed below and they will gladly assist you.

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[[1]](#endnote-1)

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