

## Rebar raises red flag at scrap yard

Written by Nick Bechtel The Marion Star

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**MARION** — Something seemed wrong when a local man repeatedly took steel reinforcing bars to a local recycling and scrap processing business.

Sims Bros. is no stranger to recycling scrap iron and steel, among other products, but it was the “quality and quantity” of steel rebar — tension devices found in reinforced concrete and masonry structures — that tipped off one employee at the Marion business to an illegal activity.

Scott Knowles, general counsel for Sims Bros., said red flags were raised after a man was noticed selling a suspicious amount of steel rebar for at least a month.

“We purchased more than \$70,000 worth of it,” he said. “That amount coming in from an individual peddler is higher than normal.”

The rebar, typically 3 to 5 feet in length, was “good, clean material,” according to Knowles, which drew additional attention.

“It was very clean, versus someone cleaning up their garage with old car parts: dirty, dusty and covered in mud,” he said.

Knowles said his company looked to see if any thefts had been reported.

When nothing was revealed, he said they called local organizations to see if any steel had been reported missing. One company did report missing steel and claimed it was their rebar.

A Marion police report listed the Ambassador Steel Corporation, at 850 Barks Road West, as the company that reported the stolen steel.

Representatives from Ambassador Steel declined to comment.

The police report also listed the price of steel lost at around \$71,500 over an unspecified amount of time.

Police have arrested a man suspected of stealing the metal, and the Marion County Prosecutor’s Office confirmed that the man received a felony charge of theft.

The man’s name was not released because the case remains under investigation.

Knowles said he is not sure how long Sims Bros. had been purchasing steel from the suspect, adding that police are “currently investigating that.”

While police continue to investigate, Knowles hopes to “work together as a community to cut down on theft” of other materials in Marion.