Press Release

May 15, 2014

Morgan County revenue enforcement officers arrested a Decatur man Wednesday, charging him with tax evasion regarding a vehicle purchase.

The officers arrested Charles Drew Smith, 45, of 1242 Vestavia Drive SW at his residence after an undercover investigation in conjunction with the sheriff's drug task force.

Acting on a tip, a revenue officer and drug task force officer went to Smith's home with $6,000 to purchase a 1999 Chevrolet pickup. The "buy-money" from the sheriff's department was marked, according to supervising revenue officer Mark Palmer.

"The transaction took place with Smith leaving his name and signature off of the title and other documents," Palmer said. Smith had the revenue officer sign the title and his (Smith's) name was nowhere on it. This practice is commonly referred to as jumping title, which is a Class-C felony."

Smith purchased the truck from an individual for $4,500 in March, but didn't register the vehicle in his name. Also, his name was not on a hand-written bill of sale.

"By law you have 30 days after purchase to register a vehicle in your name and pay sales tax, but he did none of that. The previous owner's name was on the title. Palmer said. "We received information that he had other vehicles for sale in his yard, but the truck was the only vehicle there on Wednesday when we arrested him. He denied selling any other vehicles."

The sales tax is 3.5 percent.

Palmer says revenue enforcement officers will continue to investigate cases where individuals try to avoid paying sales tax.

"In the future we will be taking a harder look at such cases because these funds make up a trust fund that's designated for schools," Palmer said.

The officers took Smith to the county jail where he was released on $1,000 bail.

Palmer says he plans to present the case to a grand jury.

This is the first arrest made for sales tax evasion in Morgan County, Palmer said.

"We couldn't have done it without the help of the drug task force," said Palmer.