



IPRC CONNECTIONS

Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

April 2018

From the desk of IPR Center Director Alex Khu



Before I tell you about some of the exciting things coming up here at the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center), I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the tremendous outpouring of support and best wishes I have received since arriving in late February as the new director of the IPR Center. I am especially grateful for the loyal, dedicated staff that surrounds me every day and the relentless commitment in the fight against IP theft and trade law violations that is being made on the part of not only our staff, but also our valued partners and stakeholders representing industry in both the public and private sectors.

I am also pleased to tell you that this month marks the two-year anniversary of *IPRC Connections*, a monthly publication launched in April 2016 to highlight some of the events and activities that have contributed to the overall success of the Center's 10-year history. I view this publication as an important tool to help advance a more aggressive approach in our outreach and training initiatives designed to intensify stakeholder engagement. *IPRC Connections* has provided another forum for us to make the IPR Center a household name.

10-year anniversary celebration set for April 26

The IPR Center will mark its 10-year anniversary with a celebration on World IP Day. The theme for the event, "*Celebrating 10 Years of Achievements*," will highlight the many collaborative initiatives coordinated by the IPR Center over the years with its 23 partner agencies, industry representatives and stakeholders in both the public and private sectors in the fight against counterfeit activity. For more information, please visit www.iprcenter.gov

Safety concerns prompt warnings about counterfeit medical tourniquets

The IPR Center is teaming up with INTERPOL Washington with warnings following the discovery of counterfeit medical tourniquets by emergency medical technicians and police departments in the United States. The warnings were prompted after a tourniquet – later confirmed as counterfeit – being used by an emergency medical technician on a patient at the scene of a motor vehicle accident in the U.S. The tourniquet malfunctioned when the tension rod snapped, making it impossible to tighten it. Medical tourniquets are used in many emergency situations and are commonly used by first responders, law enforcement and military lifesaving operations around the world. INTERPOL Washington has cautioned the differences in appearance between real and counterfeit tourniquets may be subtle and difficult to identify.



Pfizer takes another step to combat counterfeit medicine

Pfizer Inc. has joined the growing list of companies and organizations using their websites to display the "Report IP Theft" button and its link to the IPR Center. The button is making it easier to report trade fraud and intellectual property theft by linking users with the Center and a form to detail their allegations. The form features drop down boxes to make it easier for the general public to submit leads concerning IP theft. Information will be automatically sent to the IPR Center for processing to improve the lead submission process while enhancing the Center's ability to respond in a timely and more effective manner. This tool is also viewed as a deterrent that warns the public that IP theft is a serious crime that can and will be reported to law enforcement authorities as part of ICE HSI's ongoing efforts to heighten public awareness about the commitment of the IPR Center and its partnerships that are poised to do something about it. According to Pfizer Global Security, counterfeit versions of at least 92 Pfizer medicines have been confirmed in at least 113 countries since 2004. Partnering with law enforcement, Pfizer has prevented at least 234 million counterfeit doses from reaching patients.

IPR Center tobacco smuggling meeting leads to counterfeit airbags

A tobacco smuggling meeting hosted nearly three years ago by the ICE HSI-led IPR Center and the National Cyber-Forensics & Training Alliance (NCFTA) is credited with leading investigators to solving a case involving the distribution of counterfeit airbags. As ICE HSI agents gathered with law enforcement officials and industry representatives, they quickly discovered that an individual recently arrested in the United Kingdom (UK) also matched an industry lead that originated from a member of the Automotive Anti-Counterfeiting Council (A2C2) concerning the distribution of counterfeit airbags exported from England and imported into the United States.



During the 2015 investigation, the IPR Center, working with ICE HSI agents at the NCFTA and A2C2, identified an online seller that was reported to be advertising counterfeit airbag assemblies and covers. As the collaboration intensified, information was shared with law enforcement counterparts in the UK as well as the UK embassy in Washington, D.C. The case was eventually referred to the head of intelligence in the UK Intellectual Property Office where the individual was linked to an organized crime group based in Poland, Bournemouth, and Birmingham that was processing raw tobacco into counterfeit tobacco products. They also connected the individual to a company involved with second hand car parts and trades.

In February 2016, City of London Police arrested Robert Czerkirk, 35, of Blackbird Close, Poole, Dorset regarding more than 100 suspected counterfeit airbags of various makes they found at an address in Poole. It was suspected that 148 individuals or businesses purchased counterfeit airbags from Czerkirk since September 2013.

Last month, Czerkirk was sentenced for selling fake airbags. He received five months in prison for each count to run concurrently, suspended for 12 months. He will also have to perform 135 hours of unpaid employment.

IPR Center applauds Albert Schweitzer medal recipient's work with ICE HSI

ICE HSI's Environmental Crimes Program was represented at the 2018 Albert Schweitzer medal ceremony for Dr. Samuel K. Wasser, director of the University of Washington's Center for Conservation Biology. The honor is tied to his work worldwide for developing noninvasive tools for monitoring human impacts on wildlife. This prestigious award, established by the Animal Welfare Institute in 1951, recognizes outstanding achievement in the advancement of animal welfare. Dr. Wasser's work has led to prosecutions of major multinational ivory traffickers that reflected his extensive collaboration with ICE HSI, the International Consortium on Combatting Wildlife Crime, INTERPOL, the Task Force on Combatting Wildlife Trafficking, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of State, and wildlife authorities in numerous source and transit countries across Africa and Asia. The award was presented by Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington during a ceremony on April 10. Dr. Wasser thanked ICE HSI for its unwavering support in the identification and prosecution of poachers of endangered species around the globe. Past recipients of the award include British Primatologist Jane Goodall.

Shrewsbury couple sentenced for roles in counterfeit steroid conspiracy

A Shrewsbury couple was sentenced in federal court in Boston for their respective roles in a far-reaching, multi-million dollar conspiracy to distribute counterfeit steroids throughout the United States. ICE HSI (Boston) participated in the investigation. Here's more on the story: [Counterfeit Steroids](#)

Veteran ICE HSI agent joins IPR Center Intelligence Section



IPR Center Deputy Director William Ross has announced the arrival of Special Agent Kevin Cousino who will serve as the Center's new Intelligence Section Chief. Cousino previously served as a section chief in the ICE HSI Asset Forfeiture Unit at headquarters. He has also held other leadership positions including section chief with the agency's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), promoting public trust and confidence in ICE by ensuring organizational integrity through a multi-layered approach utilizing security, inspections and investigations. He was also the ICE OPR Resident Agent in Charge (RAC) in Denver.



The IPR Center encourages companies and private industry organizations to help fight (IP) theft and trade law violations by displaying the "Report IP Theft" button on websites that will link users with a form to detail their allegations. For more information on how to obtain this tool, please visit our website: <https://www.iprcenter.gov>.

For more information on these stories, or to submit information for stories in future editions of IPRC Connections, please contact Chuck Jackson, charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov, or (703) 603-3941.