



IPRC CONNECTIONS

Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

OCTOBER 2018

2018 IPR Center finalizes plans for annual symposium



The countdown is on for the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center's (IPR Center) annual symposium which is scheduled for October 24 at its facility in Arlington, Va. More than 100 people are expected to gather for presentations and group discussions that support a theme of "*Leveraging the Influence of Social Media.*" An opening presentation entitled "The Power of Social Networks" will be followed by an interactive panel discussion that will focus on using social media as a public education tool. The event will also feature presentations by nationally recognized social media experts in media and marketing who will reveal their secrets of social marketing success and how their successful strategies can be easily duplicated within business, industry and law enforcement organizations.

In order to guarantee seating, the IPR Center is accepting seat reservations by email to Commercial Fraud Unit Chief Sarah Baerwald on sarah.e.baerwald@ice.dhs.gov. The deadline for registration is Wednesday, October 17. For more information on the symposium, please log onto our website: www.iprcenter.gov

French delegation visits IPR Center

IPR Center Deputy Director William Ross displays a bicycle helmet – one of many counterfeit items on display in the lobby of the IPR Center – as a visiting French delegation looks on. The delegation, led by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) International Operations Manager Jeffrey Broadman (left), and International Operations Chief Tim Hemker, also included French Executive Assistant Commissioner for Trade H el ene Guillemet; Executive Director of Trade Policy Marc Dagorn; Director of Customs Trade Pilot Program Emmanuelle Gidoin; and, Customs Attach e (Embassy of France) Jean-No el Blanc. International Operations Assistant Director Raymond Villanueva addressed the delegation during the visit, citing the excellent relationships between French customs officials and ICE HSI personnel that have strengthened the ability to successfully investigate IP and trade law violations.



IPR Center participates in anti-counterfeiting, product/brand protection summit

The Michigan State University's Center for Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection (A-CAPP) held its 4th Annual Brand Protection Strategy Summit in East Lansing, Michigan, providing a unique interactive venue in an academic setting for private sector and government attendees. IPR Center Director Alex Khu delivered opening remarks on day two of the event, highlighting product counterfeiting and the connection to other illicit activities. Deputy Director Bill Ross moderated a strategy session and FBI Special Agent Richard Mennuti participated in a panel discussion. The A-CAPP summit hosted approximately 130 individuals representing the private sector, law enforcement and academics. This year's summit also served as a transition for the A-CAPP program, as its original director, Dr. Jeremy Wilson will be leaving the program to return to a full-time faculty position at MSU. Dr. Jeff Rojek was introduced as the new director for A-CAPP. Dr. Rojek's distinguished career includes serving as the assistant director for the Center for Management of Risk Behavior at the University of South Carolina, and more recently, as director of the Center for Law and Human Behavior at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Argentine authorities learn more about IPR Center operations



Robert Soria of ICE HSI International Operations coordinated a visit to the IPR Center for Claudio Serrano, the director general of the Argentine Ministry of Security, and Alejandro Itzcovich, director of the Argentine Airport Police. In addition to the standard “101” presentation, the delegation participated in a discussion of issues involving trade fraud and the criminal activities that have been created as a source of revenue and means for laundering proceeds from the sale of counterfeit goods. The Argentine officials also learned how the IPR Center uses intelligence analysis and data as part of its law enforcement operations. (photo l-to-r: Alejandro Itzcovich; Robert Soria; Claudio Serrano; IPR Center State Department Liaison Joseph Gibling)

Vero Beach doctor sentenced to life in prison in counterfeit drug case

Johnny Clyde Benjamin, Jr., M.D., 52, an orthopedic surgeon practicing in Vero Beach, Florida, has been sentenced to life in prison following his conviction on charges linking him to a conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute furanyl fentanyl which resulted in death; aiding and abetting the distribution of furanyl fentanyl which resulted in death; attempted possession with intent to distribute acetyl fentanyl; possession with intent to distribute oxycodone; and, conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute hydrocodone and oxycodone.

According to evidence presented at the trial, a young woman who resided in Wellington, Florida died after overdosing on counterfeit oxycodone pills. The pills contained a fentanyl analog, furanyl fentanyl, as the active ingredient. Furanyl fentanyl is an extremely powerful synthetic opioid, many times more powerful than street level heroin or oxycodone. A toxicology analysis attributed the cause of death to the furanyl fentanyl. Dr. Benjamin was identified as the source of the pills, and that he was also involved with the manufacture and distribution of counterfeit oxycodone pills outside the South Florida area. The case was investigated jointly with ICE HSI.

Georgia shrimper sentenced to more than six years in federal prison for fraud

Former IPR Center Acting Director Nick Annan says the sentencing of a Georgia shrimper and fisherman who's been ordered to pay nearly \$1 million in fraud restitution sends a clear message following a case involving fraudulent claims for federal benefits provided to American producers that have suffered losses from foreign competition.

“Fraud schemes like the one uncovered in this case directly steal from hard-working U.S. taxpayers by making false claims to exploit a federal subsidy program,” said Annan, who now serves as special agent in charge of ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Atlanta. “HSI is committed to working with its law enforcement partners to pursue transnational fraud cases aggressively and hold accountable those who seek to illegally enrich themselves.”

Michael Anderson, convicted by a federal jury in March, was sentenced to more than six years in a federal prison for three counts of false statements, four counts of mail fraud and two counts of money laundering. Anderson has also been ordered to pay \$818,234 in restitution. The court imposed a longer sentence than standard guidelines for the case because of Anderson's perjury during the trial and the number of victims in the case, including the use of a deceased person to further the scheme.

Anderson, an eligible domestic shrimper, applied to CBP for subsidies based on the claim that his shrimping business expenses from 2005 to 2007 were more than \$24 million – a claim refuted during his trial, and further debunked by his own bank records and tax returns. Based on Anderson's fraud, the government paid him more than \$800,000 to which he was not entitled. Anderson used those illegally obtained proceeds to purchase boats, stock and real estate.

Did you know...

In fiscal year 2017, approximately \$13.3 billion worth of imported goods were subject to an antidumping/countervailing duty (AD/CVD) order. AD/CVD are additional duties determined by the Department of Commerce which offset unfair low prices and foreign government subsidies on certain imported goods. AD/CVD rates are in some cases significantly higher than other import duties, potentially exceeding 400 percent of the value of the merchandise. AD/CVD is a priority trade program for HSI and CBP.



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. In the meantime, please follow us on Twitter: @IPRCenter.

