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Nance found guilty

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TILLAMOOK - A judge found John Zar Nance of Netarts, owner of the downtown Wheeler Dealer discount store, guilty Feb. 8 of theft and burglary ring.

Visiting Tillamook County Circuit Judge Douglas G. Beckman pronounced Nance guilty of first-degree theft, possession of methamphetamine and frequenting a place where drugs are sold.

Nance, represented by Tillamook attorney Nancy Nordlander, pleaded no contest to the charges.

At Nordlander's request, Beckman agreed to postpone sentencing Nance until March 29 at 3:30 p.m.

On June 23, police arrested Nance, 53, and Aaron Dayne Kuehn, 32, of Yamhill County for being at the center of an operation that traded for cash and drugs. The ring focused on burglarizing businesses and vacation rentals throughout the region.

The investigation leading up to the arrests included law officers from Tillamook, Lincoln County and Newberg.

On Jan. 29, Kuehn pleaded no contest to three counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm and one count of delivering more methamphetamine.

"Mr. Kuehn was accepting stolen goods in exchange for drugs," said Tillamook County Deputy Attorney Jon Hill. "He would then see who would sell them in his store."

Investigators found 5 grams of meth in Nance's house, said Hill.

Kuehn, in custody since his arrest, received a two-year prison term for the meth delivery conviction, to be served consecutively with for each of the three firearms convictions.

Nance had been free on bail since his arrest last summer.

The prosecution did not ask the judge to place Nance in police custody while he awaited sentencing.

"I don't want to say that he's turned over a new leaf, but he certainly gave us all the information we asked for," said Hill.

"As far as his release, he does have prison hanging over his head now, but I don't think Mr. Nance is going to run."