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Crackdown on Copper Crime: AT&T Steps Up Northern California Efforts

Local and statewide collaboration and \$20,000 reward aim to protect critical communications infrastructure

As copper theft and infrastructure vandalism persist in Northern California, AT&T shared the latest efforts to combat these crimes today at a community roundtable with public safety, business and community leaders. The event, hosted by California Attorney General Rob Bonta at San Jose State University, aimed to raise awareness of the issue and coordinate effective solutions.

AT&T's multi-pronged strategy to deter copper theft includes:

- A reward of up to \$20,000 for tips that lead to the arrest and conviction of individuals involved in copper cable theft or its attempted sale in California.
- Increased network hardening efforts, including manhole security enhancements, traceable marking and paint on copper wiring, and surveillance and sensor technology.
- Collaboration with state officials, law enforcement and others impacted through data sharing, public safety bulletins and civil litigation. Last year, AT&T filed a lawsuit against local recycler Alco Iron & Metal after investigations revealed a history of illegally purchasing stolen copper.
- Coordination with industry peers to protect communications infrastructure, with plans to host the next collaborative industry summit this fall in El Segundo.

"Copper theft is a serious issue for California communities," said **Susan Santana, President of AT&T California**. "It disrupts 911 service, internet access and other critical communications infrastructure. We've been on the front lines of this fight for years, whether hardening our infrastructure or partnering with law enforcement to hold criminals accountable. Today, we're building on that momentum with even more aggressive measures to protect Californians and the essential services on which they rely."



From Jan. to June 2025, the telecommunications industry in Northern California reported 454 incidents. Notably, Northern California ranks as AT&T's third-highest region for copper theft, while the state of California holds the top position overall. Over the same time period, there were 6,000 incidents of copper theft and infrastructure vandalism nationwide with more than 1,800 of those in California alone.

The public should report any unmarked (non-AT&T) vehicles or individuals cutting and removing cable. Tipsters with information can remain confidential and should call local law enforcement and AT&T Global Security at (800) 807-4205. The reward is valid for leads received by Feb. 1, 2026.

About AT&T

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