



AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES SEARCH WARRANT SERVED AT SOUTHERN STAR CASINO IN LOWNDES COUNTY

(MONTGOMERY)—Attorney General Luther Strange announced that a search warrant was served today at Southern Star casino in Lowndes County by law enforcement agents from the Attorney General’s Office and the Alabama Department of Public Safety. The Lowndes County Sheriff also provided security for the execution of the search warrant. This law enforcement action was taken in response to illegal gambling operations. The search warrant was served this morning at Southern Star casino in White Hall.

“Today’s actions are the culmination of an investigative process over the last several months,” said Attorney General Strange. “From my first day in office, I have worked to ensure that illegal gambling laws are enforced consistently across the state.”

As a result of the Attorney General’s efforts, the country’s largest gambling machine manufacturers removed their machines from Alabama last year, including the removal of all gambling machines at the shuttered White Hall Entertainment Center casino, located just a short distance from the Southern Star in the town of White Hall. The Southern Star casino, however, opened earlier this year with so-called “electronic bingo” machines that state law enforcement agents determined were illegal.

The search warrant served today culminated in the seizure of more than 350 machines and an undisclosed amount of cash from Southern Star. These machines, along with the seized money, will be held as evidence and will be subject to a forfeiture procedure in the Circuit Court of Lowndes County.

“Until the Alabama Legislature acts to create an effective deterrent for large scale illegal gambling, individuals will continue to engage in illegal gambling activity and openly defy the law. These individuals stand to make millions of dollars in illegal gambling profits while risking only a slap-on-the-wrist misdemeanor charge. Law enforcement will continue to be forced to expend valuable resources to deal with the statewide problem, as we have recently seen in Walker County and Etowah County. The Legislature must change that weakness in our law and create a badly needed deterrent for large scale illegal gambling by increasing the penalty for operating an illegal slot machine casino to a felony,” said Attorney General Strange.

