

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Blake Burnside was in Chase County Court Wednesday, March 4, and after his hearing, was quickly whisked off to Kansas with Comanche County authorities on two felony burglary warrants in that state.

Burnside pled guilty to reduced charges in Chase County—four Class I misdemeanors—for his involvement in break-ins at three businesses in Imperial in late January.

His involvement in the burglaries here, which Imperial police believe was an attempt to steal tires and possibly other merchandise, was apparently part of a multi-state theft ring.

In the plea agreement, Burnside pled guilty to reduced charges of criminal trespassing (two counts) and criminal mischief of \$500 to \$1,500 (two counts). He was then sentenced to 50 days in jail on each of the four Chase County counts. They were to run concurrently.

He had been charged with five felonies and two misdemeanors. According to police officers, Burnside cooperated with authorities here with information on other similar burglaries in as many as 15 states, and maybe more.

In his sentencing, Judge Edward Steenburg gave Burnside credit for the 37 days he had already served in the Chase County Jail, with additional credit for good time.

Burnside, 20, of Rensselaer, Ind., was also ordered to pay restitution totaling \$1,000 for damage to the three Imperial business buildings at T.O. Haas Tire and two Frenchman Valley Coop. buildings.

Of that total, \$700 will go to the coop., and \$300 to T.O. Haas for the forced entry damages at those facilities.

All three of those buildings were broken into sometime during the evening of Jan. 22 earlier this year. T.O. Haas and co-op employees reported the damages the morning of Jan. 23.

Burnside also underwent an extradition hearing on March 4 in Chase County Court, and waived his rights in that matter. He left afterwards with the Kansas officers.

In Kansas, he is facing two felony burglary charges, related to thefts in Comanche County, located on the Kansas/Oklahoma border.