Greenwood man arrested for fake land deals; victims lose millions in land and royalties

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A Greenwood man is in jail at the Caddo Correctional Center for swindling friends and relatives out of millions of dollars in land and royalties, said Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator.

Willie Draper, 64, was arrested late Tuesday following an investigation by Caddo Sheriffâ€™s Detective Bobby Herring of the Caddo-Shreveport Financial Crimes Task Force.

Draper is accused of approaching two land leasing companies in June and offering to arrange leasing deals with individuals in the Greenwood-Bethany community for a percentage of the deal. However, he never met with the people, and instead, forged documents saying they had agreed to sell their land.

Draper presented the fraudulent deeds to land leasing companies which in turn purchased the land based on the fraudulent documents. The companies paid Draper some $50,000 in money orders and cash, which he claimed he was distributing to the landowners, but instead pocketed himself, Herring said.

The thefts came to light when the original land owners tried to pay taxes on their properties and leaned the land had been deeded over or sold without their permission.

Nineteen victims who suffered a loss of their land and mineral rights have been identified so far, according to Sheriff Prator. The aggregate loss based on the fair market value of the 88 acres, mineral rights, and royalties is $2,154,000.

Draper was arrested for five counts of felony theft and four counts of forgery. The investigation is on-going.