

Stakeout brings charge in anhydrous ammonia case

By **BOB WATSON**
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A Jefferson City man remained in the Cole County Jail on Monday morning on a \$25,000 bond.

Prosecutor Bill Tackett on Saturday charged Travis A. Hurst, 27, of 310 Travis Court, with possession of anhydrous ammonia in a non-approved container. The substance, a fertilizer, is among the ingredients used to manufacture the illegal drug, methamphetamines.

If convicted of the Class D felony charge, Hurst could face up to four years in prison and/or a fine up to \$5,000.

Hurst was one of two men arrested late Friday, following a stakeout by a sheriff's deputy and a Highway Patrol officer in the south-central part of the county.

Tackett said Monday the investigation is continuing into the possibility of criminal

charges against the second man.

In a probable cause statement filed with the charge against Hurst, Deputy Aaron Bolinger reported he and Patrol Cpl. Paul Kerperin were given directions to a 5-gallon propane tank, painted black, "in tall weeds about 70 yards to the west" of a county road.

That tank was near an anhydrous ammonia tank that was "approximately 10 yards inside the wood line."

The officers "sat about 10 to 20 yards to the east of the anhydrous ammonia tank" and waited until after 8 p.m. Friday, when a gold car pulled into the field.

One man got out of the car, while the driver — later identified as Hurst — "popped the trunk and waited in the car," Bolinger reported.

The other man went to the anhydrous tank and carried it "a few feet" before both men were arrested "without incident," the report

said.

Hurst reportedly told officers the vehicle and its contents were his and the second man "didn't have anything to do with it."

Officers said the contents included "a camouflage duffle bag in the trunk with numerous precursors for manufacturing meth," including paper towels, aluminum foil, coffee filters, Muriatic acid, a pink powder that "looks to be ground pseudoephedrine," lithium batteries and several empty containers.

"From my training and experience, I know that the items found in the trunk combined with the anhydrous ammonia are used to manufacture methamphetamine," Bolinger said in the statement.

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