

Satellite Pirate Surrenders Loot

EchoStar Communications and its security partner NagraStar, along with Bell ExpressVu and DirecTV said that a settlement has been reached in the civil lawsuit against a Canadian man charged with illegal activities associated with satellite piracy. After reaching the settlement, defendant Steve Souphanthong - doing business as B-Tech Distribution - has agreed to pay the companies \$500,000 in damages.

The companies involved in the civil lawsuit - filed in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice - alleged that Souphanthong was one of the largest manufacturers of piracy devices in North America and was engaged in creating, designing, manufacturing, selling, trafficking and distributing numerous high-profile piracy devices and software. Among the devices were ROM X cards and ISO programmers for use against EchoStar and Bell ExpressVu, and the Mikobu, Apollo 745 and Avenger line of products for use against DirecTV.

According to the companies, Souphanthong and his relatives and associates operated several well-known piracy websites like dssstars.com, dssstyle.com, dssorbit.com, dssavenger.com, huaccess.com, mikobux.org and hugadgets.com.

The companies involved with the case executed civil search orders against several different locations belonging to Souphanthong and seized large quantities of the piracy devices, business records and computer files. EchoStar, DirecTV, NagraStar and Bell ExpressVu also brought contempt motions against the defendant(s) and obtained orders freezing certain assets.