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## Ex-Romulus police chief, wife, 5 officers head to trial

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A former Romulus police chief, his wife and five police officers were ordered Wednesday to stand trial on felony charges stemming from a three-year State Police investigation that prosecutors said unveiled corruption and the misuse of drug forfeiture funds

Former Chief Michael St. Andre; his wife, Sandra St. Andre; Detective Sgt. Richard Balzer, and Detectives Richard Landry, Donald Hopkins, Jeremy Channells and Larry Droege are to appear Oct. 10 in Wayne County Circuit Court for arraignment.

All were originally arraigned in September 2011 on a total of 22 counts, including conducting a criminal enterprise and embezzlement.

The St. Andres, Balzer, Landry and Hopkins face felony racketeering charges that carry a maximum penalty of up to 20 years in prison. Channells and Droege face felony charges that carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison upon conviction.

A preliminary examination was held in April but after days of testimony, Judge James Kersten, chief judge in 33rd District Court in Woodhaven, ordered attorneys for the defense and prosecution to submit briefs in the case. Kersten reviewed the information and on Wednesday ordered all of the defendants bound over for trial.

Prosecutors said St. Andre directed a probe of liquor license violations, prostitution and narcotics trafficking at the Landing Strip Bar in Romulus and Subi's Place in Southgate, but during the investigation, officers embezzled drug forfeiture money, solicited prostitutes and made false police reports.

The officers are accused of spending \$40,000 in forfeiture funds in



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one year on prostitutes, marijuana and alcohol, prosecutors said.

According to prosecutors, St. Andre also used \$75,000 from drug forfeiture funds to buy a tanning salon in Westland for his wife.

Sandra St. Andre is accused of knowingly receiving and concealing stolen property.

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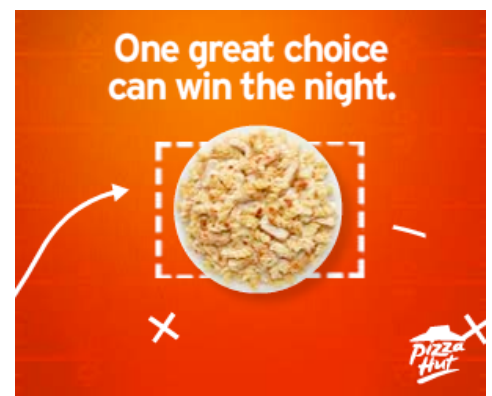


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