

Liberty Dollar raid warrant originated in Asheville

By, [David Forbes](#)

Mountain Xpress

November 16, 2007

UPDATED:*** 5:38 p.m. Friday*** The seizure warrant for an [Nov. 14 FBI raid on a company that produces Liberty Dollars](#) originated in Asheville. A spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Charlotte is not commenting on the specific connection to Asheville or Western North Carolina.



The warrant, which can be read [here](#), was issued on Nov. 9, and authorizes an FBI agent to seize “American Liberty Dollar and/or Hawaii Dala currency and/or precious metals of gold, silver, copper, platinum or other substance” located at a company that produced Liberty Dollars in Evansville, Ind.

The [Liberty Dollar](#), a “private currency,” is backed by gold or silver and, its advocates claim, completely legal. Asheville also has its own [Liberty Dollar office](#).

While the warrant does mention that “there is now certain property” in Western North Carolina “which is subject to forfeiture,” the nature of the connection to the raid in Indiana is unclear. **Sue Ellen Pierce**, a spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's office, told *Xpress* that we've received a lot of calls about this. This is an unusual situation—we have nothing open and available at this time and I'm not authorized to speak on the matter. We can't comment.”

The warrant alleges the right to seize the Liberty Dollars and related materials because of a relation to mail fraud and money laundering. Liberty Dollars are produced by a private mint in Idaho.

Kevin Innes, who runs Asheville Liberty Dollar, said that he's puzzled by the raid.

“I talked directly to the police when we first started up about three or four years ago,” Innes said. “We emphasized that this is not legal tender, that it is used for barter. We're careful not to refer to them as coins. They said we were within our rights.”

He said the raid struck him as “heavy-handed. Why didn't they just send out a cease-and-desist order?”

However, the U.S. Mint did put out a [press release](#) in 2006 that said attempting to use the money in place of legal tender is a federal crime. “Consumers may find advertisements for these medallions confusing and should take note of several issues related to them,” the release read. “The advertisements refer to the product as ‘real money’ and ‘currency.’”

A [responding release](#) on the Liberty Dollar website said that the makers have always emphasized that “the Liberty Dollar is not a coin, not legal tender, and backed with inflation proof gold and silver!”

*According to a 2006 article from Florida’s Naples Daily News, **Claudia Dickens**, a spokesperson for the U.S. Treasury Bureau of Engraving and Printing said that Liberty Dollars were not illegal: “If a merchant wants to accept Liberty Dollars, that is their right,” Dickens said. “As long as the person doesn’t claim it is the legal tender of the land.”*

— David Forbes, staff writer