LANCASTER - Authorities announced Thursday the arrest of four armed robbery suspects in the 44700 block of Andale Avenue earlier this week.

Arrested were Rodney Edwards, 19, Brandon Laury, 20, and Kenneth Menephee, 29, all of California City along with Jesse Williams, 25, of Palmdale. The men are charged with armed robbery and are awaiting a preliminary hearing on Aug. 8 at the Antelope Valley courthouse.

Williams, who is on parole according to sheriff's records, is being held without bail at a Los Angeles County jail. Edwards is being held in lieu of $1.2 million bail, while Laury and Menephee are each being held in lieu of $1 million bail.

The arrests, said Deputy Mike Rust of the Lancaster Sheriff's Station, ended a three-hour "cat-and-mouse" search for the suspects by several patrol units. The search began shortly after 10 a.m. Monday when an attempted armed robbery that occurred in the parking lot of a Lancaster bank was reported.

Deputies put out a description of the suspects' car over the radio, and within minutes assisting units found the abandoned vehicle near Elm Avenue and Oldfield Street about three blocks away from the bank parking lot. Investigators soon discovered that vehicle, a late-model green Chevrolet Suburban, was reported stolen by its owner less than an hour before the attempted robbery.

While the deputies were searching for the suspects in the area surrounding the abandoned stolen car, Rust said, they received a second report of an armed robbery that had just occurred in the parking lot of a bank near the intersection of 20th Street East and Avenue J. A second broadcast was issued giving the description of those suspects and their car.

Again, within minutes deputies had located the car, which was also abandoned, approximately two miles away near the intersection of Sixth Street East and Avenue K-4.

The second car, a late-model Honda station wagon, had also been reported stolen by its owner only hours before the robbery occurred.

While searching the surrounding area for the suspects, deputies learned that they were seen entering a brown Cadillac after fleeing the abandoned station wagon.

A citywide search began for the brown Cadillac and the suspects. Around 1 p.m., detectives assigned to the Operation Safe Streets Bureau, who were assisting in the search, located the Cadillac with four male adults inside. The Cadillac was parked in a residential driveway on Andale Avenue near Lancaster Boulevard.
During the investigation, deputies learned that none of the four men lived at the Andale Avenue location.

Inside the Cadillac, deputies found several handguns and other evidence that lead them to believe the four males had been involved in the robberies.

The robberies are being investigated by detectives from the Sheriff's Department's Major Crimes Bureau. Due to the sensitive nature of the ongoing investigation, the detectives are not releasing photographs of the suspects or the weapons.