

Personal use of government issued credit cards a spreading problem

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EDWARDSVILLE – Personal use of government issued credit cards is getting a lot of attention in Collinsville and unfortunately this problem extends to Madison County.

Madison County Treasurer Kurt Prenzler is sounding the alarm on the misuse of a county issued credit card by Chairman Alan Dunstan.

“The chairman used his county issued credit card to make at least 14 personal purchases, including flying his wife to Washington, D.C.,” Prenzler said. “Other county officials who are issued a credit card don’t appear to charge personal expenses, but for some reason the county’s top elected official operates under a different set of rules.”

Credit card records obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request last fall show Dunstan used his county credit card for personal purchases. The purchases included: a \$314 flight for his wife to Washington, D.C.; two personal hotel nights prior to a conference Dunstan attended for \$403.02; \$239.60 to Bernard’s Meat Market in Troy; \$200 to Kohl’s; \$44 for postage; and purchases at Busch Stadium, Rusty’s restaurant, Mac and Mick’s, Laurie’s Place, Round Table restaurant and a service charge at a Napa Valley, Calif. hotel room.

County records show Dunstan traveled to Napa Valley for a weeklong conference with county official Frank Miles, costing taxpayers more than \$5,000. Neither Dunstan nor Miles were members of the organization that hosted the event and they registered late at an extra expense.

“The taxpayers of Madison County are generous to Mr. Dunstan by giving him a credit card with a \$30,000 limit,” Prenzler said. “Plus, he gets the use of a county vehicle, which he drives to events after business hours, including political fundraisers.”

Although records show Dunstan reimbursed the county, Prenzler said he should never have used the county credit card to make personal purchases in the first place.

“This is exactly what the former Collinsville city clerk and current council woman did,” he said. “It’s an abuse of the system. This is about public trust.”

Prenzler said the county needs a credit card policy that prevents the purchase of personal items.