

Alton Police work with other agencies to charge local man federally

May 6 2016 1:10 PM



ALTON - A **Bethalto** man is being held based on a Federal Complaint of Detonating an Unregistered Explosive Device after multiple agencies joined together to solve what initially appeared to be a minor complaint for medical assistance.

On April 25, at approximately 11:21 a.m., the **Alton Police Department** and **Alton Fire Department** responded to the area of Central Ave. at Pearl St., in reference to an injured person. The person, a 27 year old white male, claimed to have been injured from a gas can that had exploded in his vehicle.

Responding officers looked further into the matter and initiated an investigation, locating the area where the man was injured and notifying the Alton Police Investigations Bureau there was more to this call than originally reported.

Alton Police Detectives completed a thorough investigation of this incident. As it continued, the investigation revealed that, on more than one occasion, the suspect had detonated explosive devices in close proximity to several people due to a dispute he had with someone who lived in the area. It is believed that at no point was the general public, outside of the immediate area of the dispute, targeted by the suspect.

A Federal Complaint was filed against **Richard Lee Johnson, 27, of Bethalto**, for Detonating an Unregistered Explosive Device. Additional charges may be sought as items of evidence are reviewed. Johnson remains in federal custody.

The success of this investigation would not have been possible without the assistance the Alton Police Department received from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms (ATF), the Illinois Secretary of State Bomb Squad, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

“The initial work by the responding Patrol Officers was crucial to this man being taken off the streets. They recognized that they needed to look beyond the obvious and initiated an investigation into this matter,” said Alton Police Chief Jason “Jake” Simmons.

“Then, as always, our detectives proved they are some of the best in the area and worked tirelessly to solve this incident. I am proud of all of our officers’ work and how well they are able to work with other agencies to bring cases to successful conclusions.”

All charges, as well as the statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.