

Two found dead in apparent overdose Thursday

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - A maintenance man made a gruesome discovery of two dead bodies
Thursday morning.

Alton Police Chief Jake Simmons said a maintenance man for an apartment complex on **Spark Street** walked by an open window and happened to see two unconscious people lying on the floor. Simmons said the maintenance man knocked on the window and even rattled the siding before calling police about the unresponsive pair.

Police entered the residence, which was unlocked and found two lifeless bodies next to what Simmons described as "obvious evidence" for an overdose. Names of the deceased have not been released at this time. Simmons said **Madison County Coroner Steve Nonn** would release those names after the pair's families have been notified. He said a male victim was around 26 and from **Carrollton**. The female victim was around 34 and lived in the residence.

Simmons said police and the **Madison County Coroner's Office** are working on the case right now.

"We've collected evidence," he said Friday morning. "We're awaiting toxicology reports now."

While the deaths have not been officially ruled to be due to overdose at this time, the evidence points to that being the case. Simmons said overdose deaths are on the rise nationally, the River Bend being no exception.

"We used to have a lot of Oxycotin and morphine issues," Simmons said. "The drug of choice for a lot of people is heroin. It's a nationwide problem, not just here in the Riverbend."

Between four and six people have died in Alton this year as a direct result of an overdose, Simmons said. The amount of non-fatal overdoses, however, is much harder to track.

"If you go to the hospital and drop someone off with a heroin overdose, under the Good Samaritan Law, you don't get in trouble," he said. "People from other communities come to **St. Anthony's** and **Alton Memorial**, so it's hard to track just how many overdoses there are."

State funding, Simmons said, has made the quest for rehabilitation harder. He said many families in Illinois are being devastated by the problem. Madison County, he added, has been taking progressive steps toward eliminating heroin, in Simmons's opinion.

"I know **Tom Gibbons** and Steve Nonn have done a terrific job getting these monthly and quarterly meetings about heroin addiction out there, trying to keep kids away from it," he said.

The **Alton Police Department** added a third drug officer under Simmons's administration as well. Simmons said it was a move to be proactive.

"We're being proactive," he said. "We're combating heroin coming from the **St. Louis** area into Alton, but it all starts with families. They need to get involved in their kids' lives. They need to find out who their children's suppliers are, and notify the police department."