

# **Dunstan, Parente deny allegations of computer destruction by Prenzler**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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EDWARDSVILLE – Former Madison County Chairman Alan Dunstan and former County Administrator Joe Parente both deny the allegations by present County Chairman Kurt Prenzler that they possibly destroyed data from office computers by the former administration.

Prenzler is requesting State's Attorney Tom Gibbons investigate the matter in which the former county board chairman, Alan Dunstan, and county administrator, Joe Parente,

could have wiped/destroyed information on their hard drives prior to leaving the county offices. The destroyed information includes county documents that were subject to retention under state law and court order, Prenzler said.

On Nov. 15, 2016, Prenzler presented a “Notice to Preserve Records and Documents” to Parente. The notice stated that as the newly elected county board chairman computer and electronic information be kept.

County Administrator Doug Hulme said the discovery came in late December after a conversation with newly appointed Treasurer Chris Slusser and IT Director Rob Dorman.

“Mr. Slusser asked what could be done to remove computers marked ‘FBI evidence’ from the storage in the Treasurer’s Office,” Hulme said.

Hulme said the computers were used in the case of former treasurer Fred Bathon, who went to prison for rigging tax sales.

“Mr. Dorman said he could remove them from the office, but I told him that information on the hard drives needed to be segregated and saved for any Freedom of Information Act requests,” Hulme said. “At that time I also wanted the same done on the computers used by Mr. Dunstan and Mr. Parente.”

Dorman said the process whenever an employee leaves is to make a copy of the computer’s hard drive onto the county server. He said when IT staff went to retrieve the information on the hard drives for Dunstan and Parente there was limited information or none at all.

“Mr. Dunstan’s computer had little profile data and Mr. Parente’s hard drive was completely blank,” Dorman said.

Dorman contacted a Denver, Colo. company, DataTech Labs Data Recovery, which specializes in recovering information from hard drives for government agencies. The hard drives were sent to the company in January for inspection.

Parente said all the allegations are false and that everything was left behind fully operational with files on them.

“It is procedure when an employee leaves they come in and make a back-up copy of all the files on the computer and store them in the I.T. Department and we did that,” Parente said. “We did everything according to procedure. All the files were there and two backups were done one in the office and one in the I.T. Department.”

Parente said in 2016 some of the computers were scheduled to be replaced and copies of files were taken off old computers and sent for disposal and put on the new computer. I think they are referring to one of the old computers that had been cleaned off when they refer to transferring files over. Each department goes through a rotation to change computers every five years and the county board had computers replaced in the summer 2016. They can contact us and we can explain everything to them.”

Dunstan said everything was back up from his computer and to his understanding everything was backed up. There were no files missing on my computer at all. Most of our files were on Joe’s computer and he knows how to handle those procedures.

“Most of our files were on Joe’s computer because he did the changing numbers of budgets,” Dunstan said. “Everything is backed up that was on my computer, Joe said. My computer didn’t have some of programs on there as I said because Joe did all the calculations. They can look all they want, but I am hiding nothing. I just get amazed; I think they are doing this to deflect things he (Kurt Prenzler) is getting criticized for.”