

Alton Police Department celebrates gift of safety from Fast Eddie's Bon-Air

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
May 18 2017 10:30 AM



ALTON - Most of the protective tactical vests used by the detectives of the Alton Police Department were out-of-date, Detective Pete Vambeketis said during a special "thank you" to representatives of Fast Eddie's Bon-Air held at the courtroom within the Alton Police Station Monday morning.

The total cost of the eight Point Blank brand vests was estimated at \$7,600 by Alton Police Department Chief of Detectives Jarrett Ford. He said a "sizable portion" of that cost was covered by Eddie Sholar, Jr., owner of Fast Eddie's Bon-Air in Alton. Managers of the Bon-Air, Corey Bazzel and Danielle McCahill (who is Sholar's sister) were at the department in Sholar's place Monday morning.

These new vests are replacing outdated protective vests, which were purchased in the mid-1990s Vambeketis said. During that time, he said the materials used in those vests may degrade, causing them to not be able to protect the wearer properly. These new vests, he said, would undoubtedly maintain their integrity if put to the test - adding he hoped they never had to put them to the test.

Besides being safer, Ford said the vests also allow detectives to move necessary equipment from their clunky equipment belts to their vests. He said such items as flashlights, notebooks, radios and even small medical kits were able to be placed in compartments on the vest instead of utility belts. The vests are also labelled "POLICE" in bold white letters - whereas the previous vests utilized by the detectives were unmarked and black. The bright lettering may even be seen at night.

"We had no plans to buy these in the future," Ford said, despite the old vests being out-of-date and possibly unsafe. "We had budget concerns and therefore could not designate the funds toward these vests at this time."

In the future, Ford said he wanted to ensure two new school resource officers would also receive new vests. He said patrol officers are given such vests by the department, either to be worn under their shirts or over them in a fashion, which blends with their uniforms. Ford said the vests purchased with money donated by Sholar would be used exclusively for the eight detectives within the department.

While Ford was not able to recall any other instances of Sholar directly donating funds to the police department, he said he would not doubt if he had in the past, adding Sholar was extremely active in the community and generous with his donations.

"We just wanted to give back to the police department, because of all they do for us and our community," McCahill said.

