

Alton Police Chief said holiday weekend safe, despite record crowds

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
July 5 2017 9:53 AM



ALTON - Alton Police Chief Jason Simmons said his department did not get called to any major incidents over the holiday weekend, despite record crowds at both the Liberty Bank Alton Riverfront Amphitheater and the downtown district.

From Friday evening until the conclusion of Tuesday, July 4, Simmons said his department was not called to any major incident. He said this year's pleasant weather encouraged more children to light illegal fireworks in the street, but said there were not

many calls to the station other than those. Simmons actually described the weekend as "uneventful."

"We had a pretty uneventful weekend from Friday through Tuesday, despite having record crowds both downtown and at the amphitheater," he said. "We had nice weather, and no major traffic incidents."

Police visibility is the factor Simmons most attributes to this weekend's peaceful demeanor. He said every officer from himself down was present at either the amphitheater for the fireworks display or downtown for the free Gin Blossoms show. Simmons himself patrolled downtown from 8 p.m. - 1 a.m. He said police did not even receive a single fight call.

"It was a rather safe and fun weekend," he said. "I think it was because the band was a bit of an older band, and it was the kind of band older people like, who wanted to go down there, have a good time, eat, drink and enjoy themselves. Everything was also very well organized down at the amphitheater."

Another factor contributing to the holiday weekend's peaceful quality was the completion of the berm near the riverfront by the Army Corps of Engineers. Simmons said if that berm near Henry Street had not been completed as schedule, there would have been severe traffic congestion. Since it was completed as scheduled, everyone was able to funnel out in an orderly fashion.