

Stopping Jersey, Greene and Calhoun crime: Two Rivers Crime Stoppers

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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JERSEYVILLE - One of the last areas in the State of Illinois without a Crime Stoppers organization now has one.

Founded in April 2017, and growing ever since, the Two Rivers Crime Stoppers organization provides the ability of people living in Jersey, Greene and Calhoun Counties with the ability to anonymously report crimes to a volunteer-based group of civilians who work with and under the instruction of law enforcement. Crime Stoppers is an international organization, which was originally founded in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1976.

Two Rivers Crime Stoppers President Terry Woelfel is the executive of an unpaid board who he says exists in order to help law enforcement solve crimes. Woelfel said Crime Stoppers give an additional layer of anonymity to people calling to report crimes. He said no one in Two River Crime Stoppers will ask a caller for a name or any personal information. Callers are assigned a number they can use later to collect a reward if an arrest is made.

"One of our goals is to overcome obstacles and form new channels of knowledge from the public to the police," Woelfel said. "We do it through social and conventional media, and we're a total non-for-profit organization, we're 100 percent volunteers."

Woelfel became involved when Calhoun County Sheriff William Heffington invited him to a meeting for the potential organization in Jerseyville. That meeting, in April 2017, gave instructions on the creation of the organization.

Since its creation, Woelfel said the Two Rivers Crime Stoppers has made a presentation at a Jersey County Business Association meeting, during which as many as 42 businesses were able to see the purpose and methods of the organization.

Some of those purposes and methods include conferences, crime statistics and mentoring. Woelfel said he is also reaching out to school districts within the group's coverage area to do the same thing.

"We're trying to talk about what Crime Stoppers is, and what we can do to stop some of the crimes in the area," he said.

When asked what some of the crimes in those counties are, Woelfel said, robberies, burglaries, drugs and senior fraud are all matters of concerns to law enforcement and private citizens alike.

"There is a lot of senior fraud that goes on," he said. "People are always trying to con senior citizens."

Two Rivers Crime Stoppers is funded by a mixture of private donations and fundraisers. As of now, no such fundraisers are planned, but Woelfel said that will change in the near future.

To reach Two Rivers Crime Stoppers, call the toll-free number, 1-800-300-2590.

"Our slogan is, 'see something, say something and call Crime Stoppers,'" Woelfel said. "We're just people helping people, and if the people don't stand up and stop crimes, it's not going to stop. There are not enough police to do it."