

Fire Department responds to possible weekend drowning in Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Alton Fire Department Battalion Chief Robert Franke dove as deep as 12 feet several times Saturday evening to retrieve a man who had fallen into the Mississippi River near the Alton Marina.

Alton Fire Chief Bernie Sebold said the man, who was later pronounced dead at a local hospital, may have suffered what he described as a "cardiac event" before falling into the water. He said the cause of death will be determined by an upcoming autopsy, and could not comment whether the man was killed by that cardiac event or by drowning.

"We cannot say for sure whether or not it was an actual drowning at this time," Sebold said. "He may have had a cardiac event before hitting the water. We won't know the cause of death until an autopsy has been performed."

Firefighters were called to the scene at 6:57 Saturday evening. Sebold said firefighters were posted at the Alton Expo that day for the purpose of providing first aid. They responded to the nearby marina with the Alton Police Department.

After arriving on the scene, Sebold said Franke dove into the water and found the man after several attempts.

The man has not been identified by authorities at this time.