



Local banks increasing security in the wake of serial robber

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EAST ALTON - After the robbery of three area banks since the end of November by who appears to be the same man, local banks and police departments are upping security measures.

His spree began on Wednesday, Nov. 29 when a black male of average height and average to slim build wearing a dark hoodie and glasses robbed the [U.S. Bank location on Washington in Alton](#). On Dec. 20, a man fitting that same description robbed the [Reliance Bank location on Godfrey Road in Godfrey](#). In both of those occurrences, he escaped on foot. A suspect with the same description then robbed the [Regions Bank location in East Alton](#) on Dec. 22, only two days later. On that occasion, the suspect escaped in a black Chrysler 300 with Missouri registration, police said. Both the East Alton and Wood River Police Departments confirmed the incidents seemed to be done by the same suspect.

Because of the spree, the Wood River Police Department has increased patrols near banks within its jurisdiction. Wood River Deputy Chief Dan Bunt confirmed the department was "reorganizing its patrols" Tuesday afternoon, and reporters from Riverbender.com sighted officers stationed at and near local financial institutions. The Regions Bank in East Alton also had additional security personnel on the scene Tuesday, as also seen by reporters.



Over the holiday weekend, a person reached out to Riverbender.com via text and said she had seen the robber waiting in his car before entering the Regions Bank in East Alton. She said she was walking across the parking lot from the nearby post office and saw the man without the hood and glasses. She described him as having short, wavy hair underneath his hood and dark eyes.

When asked if they were aware of that witness, the East Alton Police Department said they were not, despite her claiming to have given that description to authorities. She did not want her name to be released, but said she called the East Alton Police Department after the robbery, adding the department did not return her call as they promised. Officers from the East Alton Police Department stated they had two witnesses from the the scene that day, and this woman was not one of them.

There were also robberies reported at the [Alton Dollar Tree location off Homer Adams Parkway](#) and the S Mart gas station (formerly the Zephyr station) on East Broadway over the week leading up to Christmas. Alton Police Chief Jason "Jake" Simmons said those two robberies were not related to each other, nor were they likely related to the bank robberies. He said his department would be increasing patrols over the Christmas holiday.

He added crimes such as these are exactly the sorts of crimes the upcoming license-plate-reading cameras on the Clark Bridge will be designed to solve and prevent.