

# **Update: Alton Police investigating late night carjacking as part of a larger "criminal element"**

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
January 12 2018 10:54 AM



ALTON - Detectives from the Alton and Granite City Police Departments are working in tandem to bust what is suspected to be a related string of carjackings in both cities Thursday evening.

Alton Police Chief Jake Simmons said two young black males wearing cloth over their faces approached a person just before 10 p.m. Thursday evening on the 600 block of Fourth Street near Henry. Simmons said they were armed with a handgun, and presented it during the vehicle theft. Simmons said he believed the suspects were possibly part of a greater "criminal element" originating from North St. Louis County.

Earlier that day, two armed black males - one with a handgun, another with an AR-15-style assault rifle - stole a 2014 red Dodge Charger near the Granite City Wal-Mart. Simmons said a second armed car jacking describing similar suspects also occurred in Granite City prior to the Alton incident. He said his detectives are working with the Granite City Police Department to see if the two are, in fact, related.

"We think this, because a few weeks ago, a carjacking in Alton was directly related to two carjackings in Pontoon Beach," Simmons said. "We think it is a criminal element coming up Route 3 or across the bridge, because these incidents occur in close proximity to the highway and the bridge."

As for the bridge cameras, Simmons said technical difficulties were keeping the license-plate-reading system from being completely available to authorities. Electrical, internet and cellular issues are currently keeping those cameras from performing their functions.

"It's pretty normal for this to happen in cold weather like this," Simmons said. "We expect to have everything fully functional by the middle of next week."

In the meantime, Simmons said the Alton Police Department will be drastically increasing its presence on the Clark Bridge this weekend. He said officers will be out in force making traffic stops in an effort to quell some of the potential criminal elements attempting to make access into Alton from the Clark Bridge.