



# Cheap Chinese currency trickling into Staunton bank

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STAUNTON – First National Bank in Staunton has been having issues with “funny money” in the last week.

Bank Operations Officer Shari Ferry said counterfeit \$20 and \$50 bills have come through from merchant deposits in recent weeks. The bills have Chinese markings on them, which were attempted to be removed by whoever was passing the counterfeit currency. Ferry could not pinpoint exactly which merchants deposited the fake bills, but said their discovery made the bank issue a warning to all individuals and businesses in Macoupin County at least to watch what they accept as legal tender. Ferry said similar bills may have been passed at Mt. Olive's homecoming festival.

Once discovered, Ferry said the bills were taken to the bank's compliance officer who issued a now-viral Facebook post regarding the fake money and contacted authorities. Ferry said she feels like Staunton is not the base of it.

In fact, First National Bank Director of Marketing Nancy Roettgers said the bills are actually used in China to help international tellers learn how to count money. They are realistic fakes based on weight and material, but the Chinese markings approximately translate to “bank-training money.”

Ferry, however, said people ignored those markings because markings on actual currency are commonplace in modern times.

“I think people have become so accustomed to bills with things drawn on them or stamps or markings,” She said. “There was once a way you could track where your dollar bill has been by following a link stamped on it. With all these scribbles and drawings even, people have grown accustomed to seeing them on their money.”

“We need to educate everyone – business people and consumers alike – to take a closer look at the money they're being handed,” Roettgers added.

This particular batch of Chinese funny money is denoted by its obvious Chinese markings, however whoever was attempting to pass them did their best to remove those, as well as black lines in certain areas of the bills.

Unfortunately, though, these bills are easily accessible online via several sites, so both Roettgers and Ferry insist people watch the money they are handed and are handing to people. Outside of Chinese teller training bills, there are also bills saying “for use in motion pictures only,” which have also come through the bank in the past.