



Alton Fire and Rescue, AVEC Search Intensely for Clark Bridge Jumper, Operations Suspended at 2:22 P.M.

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Alton Fire and Rescue and Alton Volunteer Emergency Corps (AVEC) were involved in a search and rescue operation for a man who apparently jumped off the Clark Bridge Sunday afternoon.

A passerby saw a person on the bridge, then called police at 11:28 a.m. Another witness who was at the Clark Bridge at that time said they viewed a vehicle stopped on the bridge. Police used the vehicle at the scene to identify the jumper.

AVEC launched to assist Alton Fire and Rescue in the Mississippi River with its boat just after 1 p.m. Prior to AVEC's Mississippi River entry, the Alton Fire and Rescue Boat was searching between the bridge and the Melvin Price Lock and Dam area.

Alton Fire Department Chief Bernie Sebold said the last known location of the person was near the Illinois state line sign in the northbound lanes of the Clark Bridge heading back to Alton. Sebold said there was a vehicle that was towed from the bridge after it was discovered.

The fire chief said operations had been suspended as of 2:22 p.m. Sunday for the fire and rescue team and AVEC. He described the conditions on the river as “very cold out there for sure.”

“The actual temperature was not that bad, but the wind was terrible,” he said. “I made a phone call back to the Coast Guard at 2:22 p.m. and told them we were suspending the operation for today.”

“When we received the initial call, we launched the boat in the water shortly thereafter where the initial location the person was believed to have gone in.

“We worked down to the lock and dam and worked backward. We made contact with the lockmaster at Mel Price to see if there was anything the towboats on water could see. Additionally, we made contact with the Coast Guard out of St. Louis and they are very helpful in these types of situations. They can do calculations based on current river speed and estimation how far a person in water would move based on heights on the bridge. Thankfully we didn't have ice on the river today, so we could search.”

Sebold said IDNR will have better technology to search underwater Monday. Riverbender.com will follow the story Monday for the latest on the river search.



