

Alton Police Crackdown on Utility Solicitation Without Proper City Permits, Issue Warning to Residents

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The Alton Police Department reported on a utility solicitation that occurred on Friday, Jan. 31, in the 600 block of Marsh Avenue and Hillcrest in Alton.

Alton Police Department Sgt. Andrew Pierson provided the information below: "On Friday, Jan. 31, 2020, our officers responded to a report of two black males soliciting

utility services in the 600 block of Marsh Avenue. A green 1995 Ford Aerostar van with Indiana plates was located in front of the reportee's residence of 617 Marsh Avenue. The two males were located in the 500 block. Initially, the two males denied operating the van, but later one of them admitted to driving it. That male had an expired Illinois driver's license. The other male was found to be on IDOC MSR parole. Both males were wearing Spark Energy jackets, had Rushmore Inc ID lanyards, and when asked said that they work for AAA Gas & Electric Inc. The suspects did not have City Permits for soliciting. The males were arrested, issued city ordinance citations, the vehicle was towed, and they were released once processed. The males had made statements that they were working with two females who were also in the area.

"Officer Tindall located the females on Hillcrest at Main Street. They were also wearing the same jackets, with Rushmore ID's. They were both issued a city ordinance citation and released from the scene. Everyone associated to these incidents were from the Chicago Land area.

"On Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020, our officers responded to a complaint from Hillcrest Apartments, 1710 Muny Vista, in reference to several subjects, later found to be five people, soliciting utility services. Officers located the various individuals throughout the building, and in the front parking lot in an Enterprise rental. The suspects did not have City Permits. Upon contacting several residents who had gathered in the lobby, they were all scared that these five people were able to get into the building and were knocking on their doors. Posted on the front door of the building entrance is a NO TRESPASSING sign. All five males were arrested for Criminal Trespass and issued city ordinance citations.

"Enterprise was contacted and none of the males were authorized on the rental agreement. The vehicle was towed with their urging and per our investigation. Several residents at Muny Vista were very grateful for our response and how the situation was handled. Everyone associated to these incidents were from the Chicago Land area. According to statements made by the suspects, they had just came from Collinsville to Alton, and this was their first stop. Based on this, I believed that they were intentionally targeting the senior community."

Pierson continued: The "boss" and renter of the vehicle, Jaunius Geleziunas, bonded all five people out of jail via an online payment, and has made several efforts to get the Enterprise car released to the same five people. We have confirmed with Enterprise LEO agents that once an Enterprise vehicle is towed, Enterprise employees are the only ones authorized to obtain the vehicle. Geleziunas had a very hard time grasping this information and seemed displeased with our decision to not release the car to his "employees".

Pierson closed by saying: "In both incidents, our officers did an excellent job in protecting the Citizens of Alton from these scammers. If you have any questions or concerns about these incidents, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.