

Cross-River Crime Task Force Completes Deployment in Wood River and East Alton

by Brian Brueggemann
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EAST ALTON/WOOD RIVER - Madison County's Cross-River Crime Task Force recently completed another saturation deployment resulting in dozens of traffic stops and multiple arrests on various charges or on outstanding warrants.

Results of the deployment conducted on the evening of Thursday, Feb. 23, in the Wood River and East Alton area included more than two dozen traffic stops, multiple arrests

on outstanding warrants, assisting East Alton Police in apprehending a motorist fleeing a hit-and-run crash, methamphetamine-possession charges against three individuals, and one vehicle pursuit over Clark Bridge (pursuit terminated for safety reasons).

The Cross-River Crime Task Force, comprised of officers from police agencies across the county, uses real-time data from Automated License Plate Readers in conjunction with saturation patrols to stem the flow of crime into Madison County from across the Mississippi River. Major Nick Novacich, who serves as commander of the task force, thanked his team.

“This was a deployment of just our Core Team of hand-picked individuals from across the county, and when they show up in a community, it has a real effect,” said Novacich. “We appreciate Wood River and East Alton inviting us to conduct a patrol in their area. And we believe this patrol shows once again that deterrence matters. We were able to make many stops and assist the local law enforcement agencies, but we also noticed that when our unit hit the street Thursday evening, there was a marked decrease in the type of ‘hits’ we’re seeking on local License Plate Readers. We hope criminals continue to get the message as we continue to conduct patrols across the county.”

Wood River Police Chief Brad Wells thanked the Task Force members for their efforts:

“The Wood River Police Department is hard at work fighting crime, and bringing the top-notch individuals with the CRCTF into our neighborhoods really helps make a difference. I thank them for their time and efforts in our area.” East Alton Police Chief Scott Golike also thanked the team. “This is a great tool, and really helps small departments like ours make a big impact in just a short period of time,” Golike said. “I look forward to seeing this task force bring similar efforts elsewhere in the county, as together we work to keep dangerous offenders off our streets and roadways and ultimately out of our neighborhoods.”

The Wood River/East Alton patrol of the Cross River Crime Task Force comes amid significant news coverage in the St. Louis region of the deadly and life-threatening results of what some officials are referring to as traffic violence.

These are swift-moving crimes involving motor vehicles and the use of highways, and include carjackings, vehicle thefts and other offenses. Such crimes are a major concern throughout the St. Louis metropolitan region, and are chief among the types that the Cross River Crime Task Force aims to prevent and deter.