

Reported panhandlers cause concern

(KAIR)--Although no actual robbery is reported, apparent panhandlers in the Atchison Walmart parking lot cause alarm, as outlined in a widely read Facebook post made this week.

Atchison Police Chief Mike Wilson tells MSC News his office was alerted to the suspected panhandler, or panhandlers, who remains unidentified.

"We did begin investigating as much as we could, with the limited information we had as to what may have occurred in the parking lot. We did speak with a lady on Tuesday evening who told us that she'd been approached by the panhandler in the parking lot earlier...she walked away from the panhandler and nothing further occurred."

Wilson says the first report was made Monday, followed by the now deleted Facebook post that began circulating Tuesday; and while no victim has come forward alleging an altercation, his office continues to investigate. "We're going to increase our patrols out there and try to prevent any of this from happening, and to identify any problems that come about."

Wilson says the concern being shown is a reminder to remain vigilant and aware year round, but specifically during the Christmas shopping season, and to take certain steps if approached by a stranger seeking money. "Don't speak to them, walk away, walk back to the store area if it's in the parking lot. Report it to some staff member, or person in the area. Get back to where there's larger groups of people...don't isolate yourself."

Anyone who encounters any aggressive activity is urged to notify police immediately.

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