



Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

826 Fourth Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Date: Friday October 21, 2011

From: Lt. Dave Morey

Subject: Robbery of Coast Central Bank, McK.

Case: 201105698

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On Thursday October 20, 2011 at about 1330 hours, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office received a report of a bank robbery at the McKinleyville Ray's Food Place Coast Central Credit Union Branch. Deputies responded to the bank and discovered the suspect had successfully robbed the bank and had fled prior to the arrival of the deputies. Employees of the bank were interviewed and described how a dark tan complexion male (5-9 to 5-10 tall medium to stocky build) approached the teller counter. The suspect was wearing a dark colored bandana over his face and wearing a large felt style floppy hat, "Like a pimp costume hat," gray sweater with a very bright royal blue shirt under the sweater. The first teller the suspect approached told the suspect he would need to remove the bandana from his face prior to conducting business. The suspect the displayed a handgun and demanded money from the teller. The suspect next went to a desk and demanded money and was told none was stored at that location. The suspect then went to a second teller and demanded money there.

The suspect then exited the bank with an amount of money that is not being released. An employee followed the suspect out of the bank and was able to watch the suspect remove his hat (dark "buzzed cut hair) and enter a green newer model Mazda with tinted windows, white stickers on the rear window and a "5" in the license plate, modified exhaust. The employee watched as the vehicle drove out of sight, westbound on School Road.

An officer from the Arcata Police Department had been monitoring the call and parked near US 101 and Giuntoli Lane to watch for the suspect vehicle. The suspect vehicle did pass the Arcata Officer and an attempted traffic stop was made. The suspect failed to yield to the Arcata Police Unit and a pursuit was initiated. The suspect drove to the 500 block of Fieldbrook Road, near Parker Lane, and exited the vehicle fleeing into the woods behind the residence. Deputies from the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, Wardens from the California Department of Fish and Game, Officers from the Arcata Police Department and Officers from the California Highway Patrol responded to assist in the search for the suspect. A request for a helicopter from the California Highway Patrol was made. The helicopter attempted to respond to the search area, but was not able to assist due to low clouds and fog.

While a perimeter was established at this location, two Detectives from the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, the Sheriff's Office Crime Scene Investigator and two Agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) responded to the Coast Central Credit Union for interviews, evidence collection and investigative steps.

At the suspect search scene the California Highway Patrol restricted traffic to one lane, due to the high volume of police vehicles. The roadway was not closed. The Arcata Police Department was responding with a K9 to assist with the suspect search and a perimeter was maintained awaiting the K9. The Fieldbrook Elementary School, which was 3 – 4 miles from this scene, was notified of the current situation. The school independently decided to place the school on "lock down." This lock down also affected the Dow's Prairie Elementary School's end of day bus route.

Once the Arcata Police Department K9 arrived on scene, an extensive search of the area began. This included contacting numerous residents for possible sightings of the suspect and

search of multiple outbuildings and wooded and brushy locations. The suspect was not located during this first search. At no point was a SWAT team requested or involved with this search.

The search was suspended and Sheriff's Detectives, Sheriff's Crime Scene Investigator and FBI Agents arrived to process the suspect's vehicle for evidence. During this process, officers and agents were alerted by a resident who had just seen the suspect on Parker Road. One deputy briefly witnessed the suspect as he ran into a heavily wooded area. Again multiple officers and agents converged on the location with the assistance of the APD K9. The K9 alerted on several locations, multiple buildings were searched and neighbors notified. The suspect was not located and the search was concluded when hours of darkness limited the ability to safely search.

During this operation, there were no evacuations requested of the neighborhood and multiple residents were contacted to be made aware of the situation. Residents were asked to be vigilant of their surroundings and to call the Sheriff's Office with any suspicious activity.

Regarding this investigation:

The Sheriff's Office and FBI are conducting the robbery as a joint investigative effort. The identity of the suspect is believed to be known by the investigators. There were multiple items of evidence located that are being forensically analyzed that will further solidify the suspect's identity. The name of the suspect will not be released until the analysis of the evidence is completed. There is a high degree of probability that this suspect is responsible for other bank robberies, not only in our area but other locations in California and Oregon. Recovered evidence is being evaluated to support that probability.

Mike Downey
Sheriff

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