MCSO SPECIAL INVESTIGATORS END DANGEROUS ARMED ROBBERIES

“CRAZY EIGHT BANDIT” IS SHOT BY FUGITIVE APPREHENSION TEAM

A special unit of the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) ended a series of dangerous armed robberies on July 28. MCSO Fugitive Apprehension and Tactical Enforcement (FATE) used lethal and non-lethal force in pursuing and stopping a suspect believed to be involved in 16 robberies at local businesses in and around MCSO District III.

45-year old Willie Timmons, who is known as the “Crazy Eight Bandit,” was shot during a foot chase after investigators observed him robbing the O’Reilly’s Auto Parts Store located at 8964 W. Peoria Avenue in Peoria. As he left the business, Mr. Timmons was pursued by Deputies attempting to get him in custody. After resisting arrest by ignoring verbal commands to stop running, Mr. Timmons appeared to reach for an object in his waistband believed to be his weapon. The escalating confrontation ended with the use of both non-lethal and lethal force by MCSO. No MCSO Deputies were hurt in the incident. Mr. Timmons has life-threatening injuries and is being cared for in a local hospital. An airsoft pistol, a replica of an actual firearm, was taken as evidence from Mr. Timmons by Deputies.

The event took place around 9PM on Friday, July 28, 2017. “Our Deputies were threatened by a suspect that they witnessed being armed and violent and they acted responsibly in stopping him,” said Sheriff Paul Penzone. “This man is a dangerous person. It was a matter of time before he would have hurt customers or employees of the businesses he had robbed.”

Mr. Timmons had been under surveillance that day by the MCSO Special Investigations Division (SID). He’s believed to be responsible for up to 16 armed robberies over the past five (5) months in the West Valley, targeting businesses including convenience stores and pharmacies. Working with the Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center (ACTIC), using intelligence and evidence gathered by MCSO Deputies along with Surprise and Peoria Police, SID was able to identify Mr. Timmons’ vehicle and residence. Investigators were also able to match tattoos from surveillance video of recent robberies to tattoos on Mr. Timmons’ hands. Their tracking led them to the auto parts store Friday night. Following the Friday incident, MCSO served a search warrant at his home and gathered additional evidence.
“This shows us again the value of our partnerships with local police departments,” said Sheriff Penzone. “Peoria and Surprise Police data combined with work by MCSO Deputies and Detectives gave us a strong chance of finding this suspect and neutralizing the threat.”

As MCSO narrowed its search to this suspect, it called in support from the Sheriff’s Fugitive Apprehension Tactical Enforcement team (FATE). FATE was formed after Sheriff Penzone took office in January and has arrested 104 violent felons on outstanding warrants who were on the streets and capable of committing additional crimes. FATE specializes in active pursuits of armed and dangerous individuals and its expertise made a difference in stopping this offender. “We were fortunate that no employees, bystanders, or FATE Deputies were harmed,” said Sheriff Penzone. “These operations that take place in high traffic areas are challenging. FATE had the expertise and training to end this threat without any innocent people being hurt.”

Deputy D. Parra an almost 20-year veteran of MCSO shot Timmons during the foot chase immediately after the robbery. Per MCSO policy, he is on paid administrative leave while the event is reviewed by the office’s Professional Standards Bureau (PSB).

Mr. Timmons’ criminal record shows conviction for numerous armed robberies in Missouri where he had been paroled after serving 10 years of a 15-year sentence. He had once been arrested and charged with homicide, but was not convicted. Conditions of his parole included permission to live in Arizona.

“The Crazy Eight Bandit” began robbing businesses in May, concentrating on Peoria, Surprise, and unincorporated areas of Maricopa County. The name “Crazy Eight” was derived from the suspect’s tendency to act on dates with the number eight or to separate his actions by eight days.

“Credit for ending these dangerous robberies goes to MCSO’s District III detectives and investigators from Peoria and Surprise. Cooperation like this is critical to getting these dangerous people off our streets,” said Sheriff Penzone.