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City of Branson

110 West Maddux
Branson, MO 65616
417-337-8526

Public Information Department
jadams@bransonmo.gov

News Release

February 18, 2010

Contact: Caroll McCullough, police chief, 417-334-3300

Authorities diffuse potential risky situation

A 35-year old man from Florida and his 34-year old female companion from Missouri are in custody this afternoon following a bomb scare at the Branson Landing early Thursday morning.

Branson Police Chief Caroll McCullough says a security guard at the Landing noticed the couple near an outside ATM machine along the Landing's promenade. Following a brief conversation between the guard and the couple, the man and woman left. The guard found a backpack near the ATM and upon checking further, noticed a suspicious device inside, and called the Branson Police Department.

Branson officers were also wary of the device and contacted the Springfield Fire Department Bomb Squad. The bomb squad's robot moved the backpack to an isolated area in the south parking lot and disarmed it.

The man and woman were later arrested at a Landing hotel after security cameras at the hotel recorded them.

A second suspicious device was found on the back seat of the couple's car in the Branson Landing Parking Garage. Traffic along Branson Landing Boulevard in front of the garage as well as the garage itself was blocked off for about seven hours before a bomb expert checked the vehicle. The package in the vehicle turned out to be just fireworks including a five inch smoke bomb and several small firecrackers.

The parking garage reopened late Thursday morning and Branson Landing is open for business.

The man has been identified as Don Owens from Florida who is also wanted on two warrants from that state. The woman has not been identified. McCullough believes the pair had been planning to break into the ATM as crowbars and screwdrivers were also found in the backpack.

The investigation by Branson police continues and charges related to this incident are pending.