

Fake Lee traffic stop was a practical joke

Police say incident not tied to reports of police impostor

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LEE — What was thought to be a possible appearance by a police impostor who has stopped drivers in Rochester has turned out to be just a practical joke.

Police Sgt. Thomas Dronsfield said the department received several phone calls throughout the day from people who said they knew the man described in news reports.

The man was later identified as an Epping volunteer firefighter.

Dronsfield said the man, identified as Richard Santere Jr., was playing a joke on a passenger of black Honda sedan that was seen pulled over in the Lee Marketplace parking lot when he pretended to pull over the vehicle Tuesday afternoon.

"They were friends of his," Dronsfield said. "The kid driving the car said he wanted to scare his buddy in the passenger seat and told him to act like he was pulling them over."

He said Santere honked a horn like he was pulling over the car, but never used his emergency lights, so there were no charges filed Friday.

Dronsfield added that he is planning to contact Epping Fire Chief Christopher Murphy to confirm that Santere is authorized to have the emergency lighting and siren on his vehicle.

Police first received a report about the incident on Wednesday from a witness in the Lee Marketplace parking who had seen news reports about a possible police impostor in Rochester.

In those cases, two women were reportedly pulled over by an older model Ford Crown Victoria with dim blue lights on its grill.

The suspect in the Rochester incidents is described as a white male, between the ages of 35 and 45, approximately 6 feet 3 inches tall, of average build and clean-shaven with dark brown closely cropped hair. He was reported wearing a light blue jacket or Windbreaker and blue jeans both times, police said.

"We just want everybody to know it doesn't appear that it is related (to the Rochester investigation)," Dronsfield said.