SUPERIOR POLICE

David Neuss, Chief of Police

On 10/06/16 at 0813 Superior Police Department (SPD) received information from the Gila County Sheriff's Office that several schools in Miami and Globe were on lockdown due to a Facebook page threatening to "shoot up" the schools. The Facebook page name was identified as "SupiTown Klown" which depicted a picture of a clown as the profile picture. The page was deleted shortly after it was posted and the Superior Police Department, Gila County Sheriff's Office and the Superior School District were unable to identify a suspect.

The lockdowns were lifted at approximately 1000 and it is believed the threats were likely a hoax or prank. Over the last several months, there have been numerous nationwide reports of people dressed as clowns trying to scare or chase people, attempting to lure people into wooded areas and several other reports of threats being made on social media towards schools. The "clown scare" pranks have spanned the county, being reported in over 38 states including two recent reports in Arizona.

The first incident occurred in Mesa on September 30. A Facebook page named "Ain't Clowning Around" threatened to go to high schools and kidnap and kill teachers and students, similar to events that had reported in other states. The second report from Phoenix resulted in two teenagers being arrested for robbing a Taco Bell and a Dominos Pizza dressed as clowns.

The clown scare pranks have escalated significantly in recent months, likely due to media coverage and an increase of stories and videos on social media such as Facebook and YouTube. This has prompted people to "copy cat" the events and even make false reports of clown sightings or attacks. One report indicated a person dressed as a clown had been shot in the head in Indiana, which was later determined to be a hoax, likely to spread more panic and concern regarding the clown prank incidents.

These events have resulted in many schools throughout the country banning clown costumes for Halloween and police departments cautioning their citizens they could be arrested for dressing as a clown for Halloween if someone feels threatened.

This is the first reported clown incident in Superior and although there has been no evidence to indicate the threat is legitimate, Superior Police Department takes this threat seriously.

Residents are encouraged to remain attentive and report any suspicious activity or behavior to the Superior Police Department. Superior Police Department also requests anyone with information regarding the "SupieTown Klown" incident to report it to the police immediately.

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