

Bonding out with plastic *Credit cards can be used in some cases*

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Excerpts from the article

Last month a Granite City woman [posted \(cash bail\) \(via credit card\)](#) for a relative who had been pulled over by Madison police and ticketed for driving on a suspended license. A judge had set the man's bail at \$7,000, which required him to come up with 10 percent, or \$700.

Under a system that was initiated in May by the Madison County Circuit Clerk's Office, the woman was able to [post \(cash bail\) using her credit card](#).

"It's just another avenue for posting (cash bail) rather than cash, which is difficult for some people," said Troy Police Chief Robert Rizzi.

Between six and 10 people have taken advantage of the opportunity in Troy, Rizzi says. "It seems to be working relatively well," he said. "When we first began using it we had some things to work out, but we've had no issues with it."

Madison County officials rolled out the idea at a meeting of area police chiefs in March.

The county had an existing contract with [GovPayEXP, Inc.](#) (GPS), and the chiefs were generally agreeable to begin using it for [\(cash bail\) payments](#) as well, said Madison County Deputy Circuit Clerk Judy Nelson.

Maryville and Edwardsville were the first to sign on, Nelson said. Edwardsville Police Chief James Bedell had used the system in Naperville before he took over in Edwardsville for retiring chief David Bopp. "It's just another tool," Bedell said. "I'm not really concerned about how they post (cash bail) as long as they do it."

Using a [credit card for a \(cash bail\) payment](#) can save an officer the hassle of driving an arrestee to the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville, said Maryville Police Chief Rich Schardan.

Payments can be made 24 hours a day by calling an 888-number provided by [GPS](#). The cardholder must be present at the police agency before conducting the transaction. "This will keep people from spending a night or weekend in jail, when banks are closed and they don't have access to a lot of cash," said Madison County Circuit Clerk Matt Melucci in a news release. "And that will save taxpayers money and increase our agency's efficiency."

[GovPayEXP](#) is an Indianapolis-based company that contracts with more than 1,200 agencies nationwide. "The (credit or debit) cardholder pays the fee for using the service," said Dale Conrad, [GovPayEXP](#)'s CEO. "On the next business day, we reconcile the payment with the government office and then forward the full amount of the base payment to the agency."

The system is also used by police in Glen Carbon, Highland, Madison, South Roxana, Roxana and Collinsville.

Under the system, the county can also take payments for things such as [child support maintenance fees and copies](#), where the transaction fees are less. The standard fee assessed to attorneys requesting copies, for instance, is \$3.50. In the past, clerks had to set aside a copying job and wait several days for an attorney's check to arrive in the mail. When the check arrived, they had to find the copies and then send them out, Nelson said. "If they (an attorney) say 'We'll just pay by credit card,' they copy it right away and send it," Nelson said. "We're done with the job right away."