

# Wal-Mart closes for bomb threat

**By Nick Todaro**

[nick@rustonleader.com](mailto:nick@rustonleader.com)

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Managers evacuated Wal-Mart for nearly an hour Friday night to investigate a bomb threat that was called in during peak weekend business hours at the store.

The store reopened when no bomb was discovered, and police are looking for more information and the person responsible.

Ruston Police Department spokesman Lt. Curtis Hawkins said Wal-Mart's manager on duty called to report the threat at the store, located at 1201 N. Service Road East, at about 9:15 p.m.

"For the safety of its customers and employees, Wal-Mart made the decision to evacuate the store," Hawkins said in a news release. "Units from the Ruston Police Department responded to assist with the evacuation and securing of the building and surrounding area."

Hawkins said that police then let Wal-Mart supervisors comb through the facility to hunt for anything that seemed out of place.

"We do that in a lot of scenarios, because we don't know what is supposed to be there or not," Hawkins said.

He said that additionally, several officers blocked the I-20 bridge between Exit 85-86 to restrict access until managers opted to reopen the store at about 10 p.m.

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# Store workers exercise caution

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Wal-Mart manager Black Torbet, working Saturday, said that while he couldn't speak specifically about Friday night's crowd, an average Friday would bring 200-300 people to the store either to work or shop. There are an average of 50-60 workers on duty at 9 p.m. on a Friday, he said.

"We have probably a larger evening traffic flow because of (Louisiana Tech and Grambling State University), too," Torbet said.

The atmosphere around the store Saturday was cautious, he said.

"We take all threats seriously," Torbet said. "Any

kind of bomb threat like that we can't shrug off in any manner. Whenever something happens like that we're a little bit cautious about what we're doing. You can't ever tell."

Wal-Mart's Ruston location is open seven days a week, 24-hours a day with the exception of Christmas Day, when the store is closed, Torbet said. Friday's evacuation likely represents the only time the store's doors have shut to the public so far this year.

Ruston Police investigators will continue to investigate the threat, Hawkins said, but it is unclear who made the threat or why.