

# Cerritos

# Neighborhood

# Watch Report

April 2002

## Cerritos Sheriff's Station celebrates 5th Anniversary

Celebrate the 5th Anniversary of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at an open house on April 27. The celebration will be part of the Community Fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. located in the Cerritos Civic Center. The open house will include displays featuring specialized Sheriff's units including Bomb Squad, Special Weapons and Tactics Unit

(S.W.A.T.), Volunteers on Patrol, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), Star Unit, Neighborhood Watch, Long Beach Animal Control, Explorers and the Mounted Enforcement Detail.

Guests will also be able to tour the Sheriff's Station and gather information on crime prevention, emergency preparedness and volunteer opportunities.

## Neighborhood Watch Captain meeting set for May 29

The quarterly Neighborhood Watch Captain meeting will be on May 29 at 7 p.m. at the Cerritos Senior Center at Pat Nixon Park, 12340 South Street. The meeting will include a crime update and overview of the City's emergency response strategies, followed by a question and answer session. For information, call (562) 916-1258.

## Hardening the Target

### Warm weather safety tips offered to residents

As the warm weather approaches, many residents like to open windows and garage doors for home ventilation. Cerritos Sheriff's Deputies and Volunteers on Patrol have reported an increasing amount of homes that have been observed with open and unattended garage doors. This could provide a would-be thief with an opportunity to inventory belongings for future reference, or gain access to your home.

Generally speaking, burglars will use the easiest point of entry possible to get inside your home. Open or unlocked doors or windows provide an opportunity for thieves. Some opportunists are also capable of stealing

expensive property in a very short amount of time.

Passers-by or vehicle occupants can quickly obtain bicycles, lawn care products, tools, and other items in a matter of seconds. More importantly, the burglar could enter a garage, close the door and have more than enough time to pry the inner door while concealed from the street.

The Cerritos Sheriff's deputies stress the need for constant presence when your garage door is open. Be inside of the garage or in the front yard where activities can be monitored.

Remember, the burglar is someone who likes to be there when you are not. Don't hesitate to make eye contact with anyone you suspect

may be "casing" your property. This makes them extremely uncomfortable. Note a description, jot down a license plate number and call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at once.

Feel safer by protecting your home with deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Side garage doors that are not visible from the street should be constructed of a solid core and absent of any glass. Locking pins should be installed and used on all sliding windows and doors.

Remember, it is easier to cool your home by opening windows upon your return than to leave them open and possibly become a victim.

# Monthly Crime Summary: March 2002

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Cerritos Sheriff's Station recorded a total of 169 Part I crimes (mostly felonies) during the month of March. This figure represents a reduction of nearly 17 percent from the same month last year. Of these cases, 40 were misdemeanors or lesser crimes. Deputies responded to an average of 333 calls for service per week.

Seven robbery incidents were investigated in March. Two were armed robberies. In the first case, a suspect entered a business near South Street and Bloomfield Avenue, displayed a handgun, and left with a small amount of cash. In the second situation, two suspects took cash from a restaurant in the area of Studebaker Road and South Street. The third case was later classified as a vehicle theft after the victim observed his car being taken from an apartment parking lot. Remaining incidents included a cell phone being taken from a victim in a commercial parking lot, an attempt by use of fear to rob another victim of cash, a camcorder taken from a teenager and a bicycle taken from another teen by a group of teens. Always remember that property can be replaced and resisting is not worth the risk of serious injury.

In March, 20 residential burglaries were reported. This is a decrease of over 25 percent compared to March 2001. One pattern emerged in the east end of Cerritos when six homes were burglarized on weekdays between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Jewelry, computer/stereo equipment and small concealable items

continue to be the property most frequently stolen. Open garage doors continue to be a problem as entry is easily gained. Cases were also reported where windows had not been closed and locked which facilitates a simple and quiet entrance to your property. The goal is to make your home a very difficult target for a burglar. Secured sliding glass doors and windows need to be reinforced with a locking pin to keep them from being removed. Exterior doors should have deadbolt locks and be made of a solid core. In at least two incidents, a burglar alarm was activated and no loss was sustained. Remember, a burglar does not like dogs and alarm systems. Deputies seldom experience a residential burglary where an alarm has been installed.

Deputies have also indicated that a growing number of stolen items have not been engraved with the owner's driver's license number. Camera, stereo and computer equipment, along with tools and other items, can easily be marked with this identifying method and make the property more difficult to be passed from one person to another. Residents can borrow engravers from the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center by calling (562) 916-1266.

Vehicle burglaries totaled 32, down nearly 38 percent from last year. The current weekly average is just under eight. Residential streets were the location most targeted by car burglars during one week in March, but the remaining weeks reflected an ongoing trend that

commercial parking lots are the most preferable for thieves. High-end car stereo products top the list of the most frequently stolen items. Visible property such as purses, briefcases, laptop computers and camera equipment was also taken. Smashing a window or prying a lock was the most common means of entry.

In March, 33 vehicle thefts occurred with a weekly average of just under 10. According to CCC Information Services, the most frequently stolen car in the United States is a 1991 Toyota Camry. The first 19 of the top 25 included various year models of the Toyota Camry and Honda Civic and Accord. This is highly consistent with the auto thefts reported to Cerritos Sheriff's Station.

Visible deterrents such as a steering wheel locking device are generally the most useful in preventing auto thefts. If the vehicle looks too difficult to take, the thief will usually look for another. "Kill" switches will not keep your car from being broken into, but will most often keep the car from leaving the premises.

Be sure to report any suspicious person or vehicle to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at once. Alert neighbors have prevented many residents from becoming victims.

The leading cause of arrests in residential and vehicle burglary cases is attributed to alert residents contacting the Sheriff's Station to report suspicious activities. Call (562) 860-0044 to report these incidents, or dial 911 to report a crime in progress.



Community Safety Division: (562) 916-1266

Sheriff's Station: (562) 860-0044