

Cerritos

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Neighborhood

Watch Report

February 2002

Students complete police academy

Students from Artesia, Cerritos, Gahr and Tracy High Schools were among the third group of teens to complete the Cerritos Community Police Academy for Young Adults.

The Academy is a collaborative program between the City, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the ABC Unified School District that introduces students to basic police operations.

The Cerritos Community Police Academy for Young Adults provides students with information that helps prepare them for civilian or law-enforcement related careers.

The program meets high school course requirements and students earn elective credits. Topics covered in the program include crime prevention, criminal law, juvenile procedures, internal affairs, patrol procedures, canine operations, leadership and team-building exercises, detective investigations, drug awareness, homicide and crime scene investigations and traffic safety and enforcement.

Students in the program also toured the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, the Sheriff's Academy and Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall.

Neighborhood Watch members and captains sought

Residents who would like to help make the City safer are encouraged to become Neighborhood Watch Block Captains. Captains receive weekly crime trend information via email and share that information with neighbors.

The City is also seeking more Neighborhood Watch members. Citizens who report suspicious activities are the most effective force in fighting crime. For information, call Community Mobilization Officer Mike Yach at (562) 916-1258.

Hardening the



Internet safety tips offered to parents

Many young people today use the Internet on a daily basis to do homework, chat with friends and explore new topics. Parents are encouraged to use the following tips to protect their children from some of the hazards of the Internet.

- Recognize that people online may not be who they seem. Scam artists and pedophiles can mask their identities to manipulate children into divulging their identity and location.

- Take the time to sit with your child and explore the Internet together. Visit sites that cater to

children and be open in your discussions about setting limits.

- Assure your children that if someone pursues an inappropriate relationship with them or subjects them to pornographic material, you will report the crime to the authorities.

- Caution should be given to chat rooms, bulletin boards and other sources that allow your child to be exposed to outside influences.

- Install software that allows you to block certain sites, names, words or phrases.

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New technology helps identify suspect

Law Enforcement Technician David Ozeta recently became fingerprint certified and used his training to obtain fingerprints at the scene of a burglary. The fingerprints were processed through the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center's Automated Fingerprint Investigation System (AFIS) and Forensic Identification Specialist Doug Walker identified a criminal suspect who is now under investigation.

AFIS compares fingerprints with those on file in the California Department of Justice's database. Cerritos Sheriff's Station is the only Sheriff's station within this metropolitan region that owns an AFIS.

Monthly Crime Summary: January 2002

In January, Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel recorded a 22 percent reduction in crimes reported in the same month last year.

Deputies responded to four reported robberies last month. One robbery occurred in the 16700 block of Studebaker Road in Reservoir Park at night. Two suspects took the victim's car keys and fled in his vehicle. Another robbery took place in the evening in an apartment complex parking lot near Shoemaker Avenue and South Street. Two suspects took the victim's cash, jewelry and a cellular phone. The third was a residential robbery during the day near 166th Street and Bloomfield Avenue. Electronics equipment and the victim's car were taken. The fourth robbery was by physical force upon an employee who was opening a business office at 7:30 a.m. near Norwalk Boulevard and the 91 Freeway. The suspect asked to use the restroom to gain entry. The victim's purse containing a small amount of cash and a cellular phone were taken. The suspect displayed a knife in his waistband as he left the scene.

Residents are reminded to be aware that criminals will use any means possible to gain access to your home or business.

Nine residential burglaries were also recorded in January. As in previous months, there was no pattern to these crimes. One suspect has been taken into custody in one of the burglaries. Bedrooms were the primary focus of the perpetrators and small

concealable items such as jewelry, cell phones, camera equipment and cash were most frequently stolen. There was no use of force in many of these situations which would indicate that the thief(s) gained access through an open or unlocked door or window.

Residents should use a locking pin to prevent a door or window from sliding even if the lock is disabled. The only other option is to break the window which is noisy and attracts attention.

Statistics over the past two years show that in most cases, burglars are apprehended when a resident observes suspicious activity and calls the Sheriff's Department immediately. If you notice a suspicious person or vehicle, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044. Don't approach a suspicious person yourself. Allow deputies to take care of the situation. If you observe a crime in progress, call 911 right away.

In January, 32 vehicle burglaries were investigated, one less than the previous month. The majority of vehicle burglaries occurred in high volume commercial parking lots. Many of the vehicles contained valuables that could be seen by anyone walking by. Valuable car stereo equipment, cell phones, purses, jewelry and laptop computers were among the most frequently stolen items.

The two most common means of entry were by prying locks and smashing windows.

Vehicle thefts continued on a similar pace as in December, with

a slight decline noted the last week of January. Of the 50 stolen vehicles that were reported in January, approximately 75 percent were recovered. The most likely targets were 1980 to mid 1990 Hondas and Toyotas. And the most likely location was high volume commercial parking lots.

Drivers are reminded to make their cars a hard target by using devices such as steering wheel locks, brake pedal covers or anything that will provide added security to their vehicles.

Internet safety tips offered to parents

Continued from other side

- Instruct your children to never give out identifying information such as name, age, home address, school name, telephone number or password.
- Monitor your children and pay special attention to the amount of time they are spending on-line. Also look out for behavior that may suggest they are trying to conceal their activities. It is never a bad idea to walk in unannounced and view the monitor.
- If your children receive any pornographic or threatening messages, make sure that you save the material and contact the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044 and your Internet Service Provider.



Community Safety Division: (562) 916-1266

Sheriff's Station: (562) 860-0044