

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

January 2002

## Cerritos Sheriff's Station receives new crime-fighting equipment

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station recently installed an Automated Fingerprint Investigation System (AFIS). AFIS is a computer system that allows police departments to compare fingerprints obtained at crime scenes with those on file in the database at the California Department of Justice in Sacramento.

To accommodate the new workload, the Cerritos Sheriff's Station also added a full-time Forensic Identification Specialist to its team.

Without an AFIS system, there were significant delays before a detective would be notified of a positive match on a print taken at a crime scene.

Since the installation of the AFIS last December, the Forensic Identification Specialist has made a



*Forensic Identification Specialist Doug Walker demonstrates the new Fingerprint Investigation System recently installed in the Cerritos Sheriff's Station.*

positive identification of suspects in 14 of the 55 cases where readable prints were found.

The City is also assisting other nearby law enforcement agencies with priority cases.

## "Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report" features new design

The "Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report" has been redesigned to provide more crime-prevention information for Cerritos residents.

The map and list of criminal activity on page two has been replaced with a Monthly Crime Summary that provides citywide information. The summary includes tips for preventing the most frequently occurring crimes. It will also offer crime trends that can be identified in the City. Residents who would like a copy of the crime listing can contact their Neighborhood Watch Captain, or visit the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center.

As an additional enhancement, the "Watch Report" will be published more frequently, with a new issue every month.

Crime prevention information is also posted regularly on the City's web site at [www.ci.cerritos.ca.us](http://www.ci.cerritos.ca.us). To access the content, click on "City Services" and then select the link to "Sheriff's Station." This leads to a page with a link to the public safety information.

For more information on how to get involved with Neighborhood Watch, contact Community Mobilization Officer Michael Yach at (562) 916-1258.

## Hardening the Target

### Prevent identity theft with these tips

The crime of identity theft is on the rise and it has become a significant problem in Los Angeles County.

Local law enforcement suggests the following crime prevention techniques to avoid becoming a victim:

- Do not carry extra credit cards, a social security card, birth certificate or passport in your wallet or purse.
- Have your name and address removed from telephone books and reverse directories.

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# Monthly Crime Summary: December 2001

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel made a concerted effort to be more visible during December. As a result, there was a reduction of crimes against persons, such as robbery and petty theft/shoplifting.

In December, there were two robberies, one attempted street robbery, and one attempted purse snatching. The suspect in one of the completed robberies is currently in custody, and the other incident was reported five days after it was said to have occurred.

Residents are reminded to make eye contact with those around them and to be consistently aware of their surroundings. Would-be thieves seek out people who appear timid.

There were eight events of residential burglaries recorded last month. No particular pattern as to the location of these incidents within the City was revealed.

Property taken mainly consisted of jewelry, cell phones, and camera equipment. The methods of entry were via opened or unlocked doors, by forcing sliding glass doors, and prying windows. Open garage doors are a welcome sight to a burglar. Access can be gained into a garage where tools can be used to enter the inner door.

Use of deadbolts and window securing devices such as locks and pins will make any home more difficult to forcibly enter. Also, avoid keeping expensive jewelry in a conspicuous place as this will generally be the first item sought, and is known to be kept in bed-

rooms. Be creative in the way that these valuables are concealed.

In December, 33 vehicle burglaries occurred. Of these, 29 were in commercial lots where multiple vehicles are parked. Christmas gifts, valuable stereo components, purses, and cell phones were the items most frequently stolen. The majority of these items were visible to anyone walking by the car.

Take the time to lock any property in the trunk that may be appealing to a thief. If the vehicle does not have a trunk, make sure these valuables are hidden under the seats, or otherwise well concealed.

Finally, the greatest crime increase in December was in the stolen vehicle category. Much like vehicle burglaries, virtually all of these incidents occurred in high volume parking lots.

Consistent with national statistics, 1995 or older Hondas and Toyotas were the most likely targets. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station has also noticed that more incidents have recently involved the Chevrolet Suburbans and Silverado pick-ups.

Residents are advised to purchase a steering wheel locking device, or one that covers the brake pedal, making it impossible to drive the car away.

**Graffiti Removal  
Hotline  
(562) 916-1233**

## Prevent identity theft with these tips

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- Install a locked mailbox at your residence or business or use a post office box.
- When you order new checks, do not have them sent to your home address.
- Mail your checks and other sensitive mail at the post office rather than your home or neighborhood mailbox.
- Keep a list and/or photocopy of all your credit cards, account numbers, expiration dates and telephone numbers of the customer service and fraud departments in a secure place so you can contact your creditors in case your credit cards are stolen.
- Never give out your credit card number or other personal information over the telephone, unless you have a trusted business relationship with the person or company.
- Do not throw preapproved credit offers in the trash or in a recycling container without first shredding them.
- Store your cancelled checks in a safe place. In the wrong hands, they can reveal a lot of information about you. Never permit your credit card number to be written on your checks. It is a violation of California law (California Civil Code 1725) and places you at risk of fraud.



Community Safety Division: (562) 916-1266

Sheriff's Station: (562) 860-0044