

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

March 2006

## Hardening the Target

### Protect yourself from identity theft with a document shredder

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center frequently reminds residents of simple and inexpensive ways to avoid becoming a victim of crime. Among the reminders that have been covered in past issues are:

- To install deadbolt locks and locking pins in sliding glass windows and doors to prevent a burglar from entering a residence.
- To always perform an "exit check" before leaving one's residence by inspecting all doors and windows to make sure that they are secure.
- To remove visible items within the passenger compartment of a vehicle so as not to attract potential thieves.
- To purchase and use a steering wheel locking device, which will serve as a visible deterrent to any auto thief targeting your vehicle.

All of the above are easy and inexpensive methods to help you better protect your property.

Another crime that individuals must protect themselves against is identity theft.

When cars are stolen, they are generally replaced in a short period of time. When a cell phone, stereo or wallet is stolen, these items can also quickly be replaced. Lost or stolen credit cards can be canceled with a simple phone call.

Unfortunately, identity theft is one type of crime that can take years to recover from. Restoring your credit

status most often requires numerous phone calls and correspondence to do so.

A simple and inexpensive way to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft is by purchasing and using a document shredder. This appliance is helpful in destroying documents that contain account information, social security numbers or any other data that can be used by someone to obtain goods, services or money in your name.

Document shredders that can destroy up to six sheets of paper at a time, CDs, DVDs and diskettes can be purchased for as little as \$40. There are other shredders that are priced much less for single sheet destruction.

Unsolicited credit card offers are a frequent source of information

for criminals looking to establish an account with your name on it. Law enforcement officials frequently encounter "dumpster divers," or individuals who rummage through trash cans and bins in search of these offers or any other personal identification documents that have been carelessly discarded.

This is known to occur in both residential and business communities. Social security numbers, account numbers and driver's license numbers are sold to individuals who use the information to establish accounts or make purchases on an existing account.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center encourages residents and business owners to invest in a document shredder and use it wisely.

### Beware of recent scams

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center has recently received reports from residents that several e-mail messages have been received advising them that they will be taken to court and charged for violating a federal law for sending a "fax transmission," which the message says is illegal under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act.

The e-mail goes on to advise the recipient that instead of risking a \$1,500 fine in federal court, the matter can be "settled" for only \$500, if the funds are transferred to the sender of the e-mail. Residents are advised to be aware that this is

a scam. Never open an e-mail attachment if you are not familiar with the sender. Never send money to a party with whom you do not have a contract. Keep in mind that Internet scams will continue as long as there are those who fall victim to them.

Another scam recently uncovered in Orange County involved curb painters who were traveling door-to-door asking for \$15 for their services.

The group apparently represented themselves as a company with the initials "CAS" (Curb Address Service). After being paid by a resident  
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# Monthly Crime Summary: February 2006

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The Cerritos Sheriff's Station investigated 76 Part I felony crimes in February. This is down from 89 the previous month, and is the lowest Part I crime figure in a one-month period for more than a year. Decreases were noted in residential burglaries and vehicle thefts. Vehicle burglaries were up slightly, and the number of robberies remained the same. In 2006, deputies have so far handled an average of 311 calls for service per week.

## Robberies

There were seven robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in February, the same number of incidents investigated in January.

The first case began as a dispute between former business partners in another jurisdiction on Wednesday, February 1. One individual followed another to the 13100 block of Alondra Boulevard, and at 4:51 a.m. the two began to fight when one took keys and a cell phone from the other. Detectives know the suspect's identity.

On Monday, February 6 at 3:25 p.m., a suspect entered a business in the 20100 block of Pioneer Boulevard and asked for information. He then produced a handgun and robbed the business of currency and checks.

On Saturday, February 18 at 5:15 p.m., two male suspects entered a home in the 20100 block of Mapes

Avenue and confronted the resident. Both fled with the victim's wallet, a camcorder and a camera.

On Monday, February 20 at 11:32 a.m., two male suspects approached a man who had been withdrawing cash from an ATM in the 17300 block of Carmenita Road. The suspects pushed the victim to the ground and fled with the cash.

At 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 21, a lone gunman entered an insurance establishment in the 20100 block of Pioneer Boulevard and robbed an employee of cash. This is the same suspect that robbed the business on February 1, but this time a deputy observed the suspect's vehicle fleeing and a pursuit was initiated. After a "spike strip" was utilized, the pursuit ended and the suspect was arrested.

Arrests were made in another robbery that occurred on Saturday, February 25 in the 12100 block of Artesia Boulevard. Two male victims were assaulted by three suspects, and a wallet with cash was taken. Deputies obtained vehicle information from witnesses that resulted in the arrests.

The last incident occurred on Monday, February 27 at 2:40 a.m. when a male victim was robbed at gunpoint while standing in a driveway located in the 19600 block of Ray Circle.

## Residential Burglaries

Eleven residential burglaries were

investigated in February. This is the lowest monthly figure recorded since June 2005. There were 12 incidents investigated in January. The 2006 weekly average in this category is 2.4.

All of the burglaries in February were made possible by open and/or unlocked doors or windows. Frozen food, cell phones, jewelry, baseball cards, cash, televisions, laptop computers, cameras, bicycles and video games were reported stolen.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Thirty-five vehicle burglaries were reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station in February. There were 28 in January. The 2006 weekly average is 7.5. Parking lots were the venue for 26 vehicle burglaries.

SUVs, pick-up trucks and vans were involved in 17 cases, and 13 cases involved stereo items being taken. Additional items stolen included television monitors, cosmetics, faucets that were taken from a cargo trailer, purses, wallets, cameras, tools, cash, cell phones, credit cards, CDs, CPR dolls, clothing, a projector and SUV seats.

## Vehicle Thefts

Twenty-eight vehicle thefts were recorded in February, compared to 31 in January. The 2006 weekly average at the end of the month was 6.4. Parking lots were involved in 16 of the February crimes. Six of the stolen vehicles were Hondas, and five were Toyotas.

## Beware of recent scams

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with either cash or check, they were never to be heard from again. Upon further investigation, it was revealed that an "H" was being added to the "CAS" on the "Pay to the order" check line, thereby spelling out "CASH."

Keep in mind that the City of Cerritos provides curb painting to residents free-of-charge. If anyone

offers to perform this service for a fee, immediately report them to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station by calling (562) 860-0044. The City will not grant a business license for this purpose, and a license is required to conduct any type of door-to-door sales.

For more information, please visit [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com) and click on "Crime Prevention and Safety Tips."

## Join the VBC

Help protect your neighborhood and the community by signing up for the Virtual Block Club (VBC). Members receive weekly crime summaries, maps, information about volunteer opportunities and crime alerts directly e-mailed to them.

An on-line form to become a VBC member is available on the Safer Cerritos web site located at [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com).

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Safety Contacts:  
Community Safety Division -  
(562) 916-1266  
Sheriff's Station - (562) 860-0044



To join Cerritos Neighborhood  
Watch, call Community  
Mobilization Officer Mike Yach  
at (562) 916-1258.