

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

December 2007

## Hardening the Target

### Avoid becoming a victim of charity fraud

During the holiday season, there are several organizations seeking donations from the public. Many of these charities are well established and legitimate. However, there are also people who take advantage of tragedies and a joyful holiday season to solicit funds for their own personal gain.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center offers the following tips to ensure your donation is used for its intended purpose.

- Be familiar with the charity you are making a donation to.
- Keep careful records of all of your donations so you can iden-

tify scams that claim you made a pledge that you do not remember making.

- Ask for the charity's tax-exempt letter indicating its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) status. You cannot claim a tax-deductible donation if the charity is not recognized as such by the IRS.
- Never give cash. Make your contribution in the form of a check payable to the full name of the charity.
- Give out your credit card number ONLY if you are certain that you are dealing with a legitimate charity. Make sure that the num-

bers will be encrypted for your protection.

- NEVER give out your Social Security number. The number is not necessary for you to claim a tax deduction.
- Report any suspicious person going door-to-door seeking funds or property to the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. This is a common method used to fraudulently obtain money or goods, and is also used as a means to find or "case" potential victims for residential burglaries. Deputies have the ability to check these people out to ensure your financial safety.

### FTC warns consumers about a potentially harmful e-mail

Consumers, including corporate and banking executives, have recently received a bogus e-mail claiming to be sent by the Federal Trade Commission. The e-mail is instead sent by third parties hoping to install spyware on computers. The bogus e-mail poses as an acknowledgment of a complaint filed by the recipient, and includes an attachment. The hoax e-mail is personalized, and contains the name of the recipient and their business. The bogus message explains how the complaint will be used and lists people who will have access to it. The e-mail also states, "Attached you will find a copy of your complaint. Please print a hard copy of the complaint for your records in the upcoming investigation." Opening

the attachment automatically downloads the malicious spyware onto your computer.

If you receive this e-mail and you have not filed a complaint with the FTC, follow these tips:

- Do not open the attachment.
- Delete the e-mail immediately.
- Empty the deleted items folder.

As a general rule, you should never open an e-mail attachment unless you know for certain that the e-mail came from a legitimate source.

Consumers can learn more about protecting themselves from malicious spyware and bogus e-mails at [www.OnGuardOnline.gov](http://www.OnGuardOnline.gov), a web site created by the FTC in partnership with other federal agencies and the technology industry to help consum-

ers stay safe on-line.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or to receive free information on any of 150 consumer topics, call (877) FTC-HELP (877-382-4357), or use the complaint form at [www.ftc.gov/ftc/complaint.shtm](http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/complaint.shtm).

The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft, and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, on-line database available to more than 1,600 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

# Monthly Crime Summary: November 2007

Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 97 Part I felony crimes in November, compared to an adjusted figure of 107 in October. An increase was noted in robberies and vehicle thefts, while residential and vehicle burglaries declined. At the end of November, patrol personnel were handling an average of 331 calls for service per week.

## Robberies

There were seven robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in November. Six incidents were recorded in October.

On Sunday, November 4 at 5:50 p.m. a male suspect brandishing a handgun held up a restaurant employee in the 16400 block of Norwalk Boulevard.

On Tuesday, November 6 at 8:45 p.m. two male suspects approached a male victim near Pires Avenue and Bigelow Street, displayed a handgun, and attempted to rob the male victim. When the victim stated that he had no money, the suspects fled.

Another case occurred on Friday, November 9 at 7:30 a.m. as a teenage female victim was sitting on a bus at Artesia Boulevard and Studebaker Road. A male teen grabbed her cell phone and struggled for control of it. He ultimately fled with the phone but was later arrested.

On Tuesday, November 27 at 1:50 p.m. a male suspect produced a knife and robbed a man of jewelry and cash in the 19300 block of Almadin Avenue.

That same day at 6:15 p.m. a male suspect entered a business in the 13300 block of Artesia Boulevard and simulated possession of a handgun. The female inside ran out the back door and the suspect fled in the attempted robbery.

A female teen was robbed of her cell phone on Thursday, November 29 at 4:10 p.m. in the 17700 block of Eric Avenue by a male suspect.

The last incident occurred at 6:15 p.m. that same night when a male

pointed a handgun at a woman as she walked in a Towne Center parking lot and took her purse.

## Residential Burglaries

Nine residential burglaries were reported in November, a decrease from 17 incidents in October. No "cat burglaries" were logged in November, although five of the burglaries were made possible by open/unlocked doors or windows. Three windows were shattered and one door was pried open. Property reported stolen included laptop computers, video games, DVD players, tools, alcoholic beverages, jewelry and cash. The 2007 weekly average in this category was 3.3 at the end of November.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries dropped from 36 in October to 16 in November. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 14 of the break-ins. Ten of the incidents involved SUVs and four victims reported car stereo items stolen. Other items taken in the burglaries included third-row seats from SUVs, laptop computers, wallets, purses, CDs, cash and tools. The 2007 weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of October was 7.

## Take a holiday inventory

The holidays are a good time to update or create your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of valuable items, and list their descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items and make insurance claims easier to file. Make sure items such as TVs, DVD players, stereo equipment, cameras, camcorders, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment and power tools are on the list. Remember to check each item twice to ensure accuracy.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts rose from 22 cases in October to 31 in November.

High-volume commercial parking lots were again the venues of choice; 26 vehicles were stolen from these locations. Fourteen SUVs, eight Hondas and three Toyotas were among the vehicles taken. The 2007 weekly average at the end of the month was 6.4.

## Be a responsible host

If you serve alcoholic beverages in your home this holiday season, you are responsible for the welfare of your guests. Responsible partygoers should never have to regret something that happened while under the influence of alcohol. Remember, people do not like to admit that they are impaired, and may argue that they are okay to drive. Share with your friends that impairment begins with the very first drink, and remind them of the penalties they face if convicted of driving under the influence.

The Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) offer the following suggestions:

- Set a drink limit and encourage guests to eat food and drink non-alcoholic beverages.
- If you serve an alcoholic punch, make it with a non-carbonated base.
- Never let your guests drink and drive.
- Never serve alcohol to anyone less than 21 years of age.
- Don't ride in a vehicle with anyone who is impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Have a designated driver for all party events.

**STAY ALIVE;  
DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!**

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



To join Cerritos Neighborhood  
Watch, call Management  
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