

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

February 2008

## Hardening the Target

### Informed residents are safer residents

The 2007 crime picture in Cerritos continued to show downward trends in the most serious crime categories. Violent crime, which includes murder, sex crimes, aggravated assaults and robberies, declined more than 22 percent last year. Property crimes, such as residential and commercial burglaries, car burglaries and auto thefts, did show a slight increase of 2.7 percent over 2006.

One troubling crime pattern that has shown a marked increase since the beginning of this year is car

burglaries. The majority of car burglaries occur in commercial parking lots. The unusual trend this year is the spike in car burglaries at several parks, including the County Regional Park. It appears that some thieves are targeting women who leave their purses or other valuables in their cars as they walk or jog around the park. The Cerritos Community Safety Division staff always warns residents to never leave items such as purses, laptop computers, cameras or portable GPS devices in a

parked car, whether or not these valuables are in view. It only takes a few seconds to break into a car, and window glass rarely slows down a determined thief.

To learn more about how to protect yourself from becoming a crime victim, visit the City's safety website, [www.safercerritos.com](http://www.safercerritos.com), to learn valuable crime prevention tips. On the site, you can also sign up to become a member of the Cerritos Virtual Block Club. Remember, informed residents are safer residents!

### Protect your children from substance abuse

The use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is a major health problem facing our nation's youth, as it can quickly lead to addiction, associated chronic diseases, failure in school and delinquency.

A 2001 survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that one in five 12- to 17-year-olds had used marijuana at some time. Marijuana is continually cultivated to be more potent. In 2001, about one in nine in this age group had used an illegal drug in the past month. Almost half of those who smoked cigarettes in the past month had also used illegal drugs. According to another SAMHSA study the same year, only one in 20 teens who did not smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol had used illegal drugs.

As a result, there's every reason to believe that early education and

intervention can keep kids on track.

The following prevention tips are offered to help you keep your child from abusing substances:

- Educate yourself about alcohol, tobacco and drug use before talking to your children. You will lose credibility if you don't have your facts right.
- Be ready to talk to your children as early as the fourth grade, when they may first feel peer pressure to experiment with alcohol, drugs or cigarettes.
- Listen to your child's or teen's concerns with an open mind.
- Explain that it's against the law for a child or teen to use alcohol or cigarettes and that using recreational drugs is always illegal.
- Explain how drug use can hurt people in several ways, such as the transmission of AIDS through shared needles, slowed growth

and impaired coordination.

- Discuss the legal issues. A conviction for a drug offense can lead to time in prison or cost someone a job, driver's license or college loan.
- Use real examples to convey your message, such as television news and newspaper stories.
- Establish an ongoing conversation rather than giving a one-time speech.
- Set some time aside for you and your child to act out scenarios in which one person tries to pressure another to drink alcohol, smoke or use a drug. Figure out two or three ways to handle each situation and talk about which method works best.
- Remember that you set the example. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions.

# Monthly Crime Summary: January 2008

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Cerritos Sheriff's Station personnel investigated 78 Part I felony crimes in January, down from 107 in December. Increases were noted in robberies and vehicle burglaries, while vehicle thefts decreased. At the end of January deputies were handling an average of 310 calls for service per week in 2008.

## Robberies

There were 10 robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in January, compared to five incidents in December.

On Thursday, January 3 at 5:25 p.m. two male teens robbed another teen of a small amount of cash and an MP3 player in the 11500 block of Bos Street.

A woman struggled with a purse-snatcher on Sunday, January 6 at 4:15 p.m. as she was walking in a lot at the Los Cerritos Center. The suspect fled with the purse to an awaiting vehicle.

A male suspect is in custody after attempting to take cell phones from two male juveniles on Wednesday, January 9 at 6 p.m. as the victims were walking on 183rd Street near Cortner Avenue. The suspect struck both victims then fled on a bicycle that was followed by an off-duty peace officer.

Another attempted robbery occurred at 4 p.m. on Thursday, January 10 on Alora Avenue at Artesia Boulevard where a vehicle that contained four teenaged male suspects pulled over near a male victim. One of the suspects got out of the car and asked the victim what type of property he had with him. The victim immediately ran across the street away from the suspects.

An additional attempted robbery occurred on Sunday, January 13 at 7:17 p.m. in the 12200 block of Eckelson Circle. A man pulled into his driveway and observed another male drive in behind him. As the suspect exited his vehicle with a handgun, the victim backed his vehicle around the suspect's vehicle and fled.

A robbery occurred at 9:23 p.m. that same night in the 11400 block of South Street. A woman was entering her vehicle in a parking lot when a male suspect grabbed her purse and struggled for control. He finally took the purse and fled to an awaiting vehicle.

On Monday, January 14 at 5 p.m. two male suspects confronted a man on the street near Gridley Road and South Street and demanded money. One of the suspects struck the victim, and cash was taken from his wallet.

On Sunday, January 27 at 12:15 p.m. a male suspect took a woman's purse by force in the 20200 block of Bloomfield Avenue.

Later that evening two male suspects displayed a handgun at 9:10 p.m. to three males in a parked car located in the 12400 block of Ashcreek Road. Cell phones and cash were taken.

A male adult victim walking on Del Amo Boulevard near Norwalk Boulevard on Tuesday, January 29 at 6:20 p.m. was struck from behind by two male teenaged suspects who took his wallet.

## Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 16 cases in December to five in January. Three of the five burglaries were attributed to open/unlocked doors or windows. A pried window and a shattered window were used to gain entry in the remaining two crimes. Jewelry, laptop computers, cameras and computer monitors were stolen. The 2008 weekly average in residential burglaries was 10.1 at the end of January.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries increased to 55 in January, up from 39 in December. High-volume commercial parking lots were the crime scenes in 43 of the break-ins. Thirty-four of the incidents involved SUVs, and nine victims reported car stereo items stolen. Other items reported stolen included laptop computers, CDs,

DVDs, ID, cash, wallets, purses, GPS units, clothing, credit cards and briefcases. The weekly average in vehicle burglaries at the end of January was 10.7.

## Vehicle Thefts

Twenty-three vehicle thefts were reported in January, down from 27 in December. Fourteen of the vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Fourteen SUVs were taken, along with four Hondas and one Toyota. The weekly average in vehicle thefts at the end of January was 5.3.

## Save the date for the Neighborhood Watch Town Hall Meeting

The next Neighborhood Watch Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14 at 7 p.m. at the Senior Center located at 12340 South Street. Members from the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center will offer an in-depth presentation on crime in Cerritos and a special investigator will give a briefing on the growing number of precious metal thefts in Southern California.

## Volunteers on Patrol Wanted

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station is seeking Volunteers on Patrol (VOPs). Patrolling the City in distinctly marked vehicles, VOPs assist with crime suppression, traffic control, vacation checks, special events and park security checks. They serve as additional "eyes and ears" for the Sheriff's Department and train as first responders in the event of a major emergency or disaster.

If you are interested in applying to be a VOP, contact the Cerritos Sheriff's Station at (562) 860-0044, or visit the Cerritos Sheriff's Station to obtain an application.

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Safety Contacts:  
Community Safety Division -  
(562) 916-1266  
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To join Cerritos Neighborhood Watch, call Management Analyst Mike Yach at (562) 916-1258.