

# Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

March 2010

## Hardening the Target

### Scam artists target job seekers and entrepreneurs

#### Work-at-home scams

Cerritos residents are warned to beware of con artists who develop business opportunity frauds and work-at-home scams that encourage consumers to invest their own funds in start-up enterprises. These con artists typically place work-opportunity ads in the classified sections of newspapers. Consumers who contact these advertisers are then sold “business plans” for enterprises such as operating vending machines, distributing products or servicing pay phone and fax machines. The scammers claim that you can capitalize on and operate these businesses with minimal training to earn a substantial return.

As the scammers will often ask for a substantial amount of money to “start the business,” it creates the illusion that the business opportunity is a legitimate investment. Victims of these scams often believe they are investing in highly developed businesses. In fact, scam artists take the consumers’ investment as profits and commissions, and provide them with unprofitable business plans in return. The injuries to consumers can be devastating, not only in terms of the dollars they lose, but also in the time they invest in unprofitable enterprises. For example, one victim in a recent Federal Trade Commission case estimates that he spent \$75,000 in an attempt to make such a business opportunity profitable.

#### Job placement scams

If you’re looking for a job, you

may see ads for firms that promise results. Many of these firms may be legitimate and helpful, but others may misrepresent their services, promote outdated or fictitious job offerings, or charge high fees in advance for services that may not lead to a job.

Before you spend money responding to placement firms or completing placement contracts, keep the following tips in mind:

- Reject any company that promises to get you a job.
- Be skeptical of any employment-service firm that charges first, even if it guarantees refunds.
- Get a copy of the firm’s contract and read it carefully before you pay any money. Understand the terms and conditions of the firm’s refund policy. Make sure you understand what services the firm will provide and what you’ll be responsible for doing. If oral promises are made, but don’t appear in the contract, think twice about doing business with the firm.
- Take your time reading the contract. Don’t be caught up in a rush to pay for services. Stay away from high-pressure sales pitches that require you to pay now or risk losing out on an opportunity.
- Be cautious about purchasing services or products from a firm that is reluctant to answer your questions.
- If a company or organization is mentioned in an ad or an inter-

view by an employment service, call the company to find out if the organization is really hiring.

- Be wary of firms promoting “previously undisclosed” government jobs. Government positions are announced to the public in the form of flyers, website postings, etc.
- Check with your local consumer protection agency, state Attorney General’s Office, and the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed about a company with which you intend to do business. You may also contact these organizations if you have a problem with an employment-service firm.

### Cerritos Sheriff’s Station/Community Safety Center dedicated

On Saturday, March 6, the newly expanded Cerritos Sheriff’s Station/Community Safety Center was dedicated to the community.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, Assemblymember Tony Mendoza, Los Angeles County Supervisor and former Cerritos mayor Don Knabe and Cerritos Sheriff’s Station Captain Joe Gonzales joined the Cerritos City Council to commemorate the event.

*Continued on the other side*

# Monthly Crime Summary: February 2010

Cerritos Sheriff's Station logged 97 Part I felony investigations in February, down from 124 in January. Robberies, residential burglaries and vehicle burglaries were up slightly and vehicle thefts declined. By the end of February, patrol deputies were handling a weekly average of 300 calls for service in 2010.

## Robberies

There were five robbery incidents investigated by Cerritos deputies in February, up slightly from four in January.

A male adult suspect removed his shoes and replaced them with a new pair on Sunday, February 7 at 6:15 p.m. while in a retail store in the 11200 block of 183rd Street. He was detained after leaving the store and fought with loss prevention personnel. Arriving deputies took the suspect into custody. While initially handled as a robbery, after further investigation this crime has since been reduced to a petty theft.

Three male teen suspects robbed two other teens of MP3 players, cell phones and cash as they walked near 183rd Street at Studebaker

Road on Saturday, February 20 at 2:27 p.m.

On Tuesday, February 23 at 6 p.m. a female suspect grabbed a payment that she had just made on a repossessed vehicle and fled the business located in the 10900 block of 183rd Street. The suspect's identity is known.

A female was robbed at gunpoint on Wednesday, February 24 while in the 18400 block of Kamstra Avenue at approximately 8:10 p.m.

On Thursday, February 25 at 7:50 p.m. four males exited a vehicle at Bloomfield Avenue and Semora Street and robbed a lone male victim of a backpack and cell phone.

## Residential Burglaries

Residential burglaries dropped from 13 in January to 10 in February. Open/unlocked doors or windows were used to gain entry in four of the crimes and windows were shattered at three homes. A pried window, a kicked in side garage door and a garage door opener taken from a vehicle in the driveway were used to gain access in the remaining crimes. Cash, laptops, an air compressor,

jewelry, cameras, gym bags and bank books were reported stolen. The new 2010 weekly average in residential burglaries is 2.3.

## Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries decreased to 25 in February from 43 in January. Fifteen of the cases in February occurred in high-volume commercial parking lots. Ten vehicles were SUVs. Stereo components were stolen in two cases and GPS units in three cases. Third-row seats from SUVs, purses, grocery cards, MP3 players, guitars, briefcases, cell phones, cash and cameras were reported missing. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle burglaries is now 7.4.

## Vehicle Thefts

Vehicle thefts also dropped in February after 18 were investigated. Twenty-two incidents occurred in January. Sixteen of the vehicles were stolen from high-volume commercial parking lots. Six SUVs, six Hondas and three Toyotas were among the stolen vehicles. The 2010 weekly average in vehicle thefts was 5.2 at the end of February.

## Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center dedicated

*Continued from the other side*

Hundreds of attendees enjoyed numerous safety exhibits and tours of the building.

The Cerritos Redevelopment Agency invested \$6.5 million in upgrading the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center. The improvement project included expanding the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center by 10,000 square feet and modernizing and remodeling the entire facility. The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center first opened on March 8, 1997 with 32,000 square feet of office space and 30,000 square feet of parking. With the completion of the expansion, the total area of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center is now 72,000 square feet, including 42,000

square feet of office space.

On the upper level of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was expanded and the infrastructure was improved to allow for future technological improvements. A raised floor system with movable floor-mounted power and data outlets was installed in the EOC to maximize flexibility in the room's layout.

A federal grant in the amount of \$350,000 covered the cost of technological improvements to the 911 Dispatch Center located on the upper level of the facility. New ergonomic state-of-the-art consoles have been installed in the Dispatch Center that allow "sit-stand" opera-

tion for the dispatch personnel. The grant funding also provided for the expansion of the facility's communication system.

The building's locker rooms were also expanded to accommodate an increase in the number of Sheriff's deputies serving the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center. The detectives' office area was also increased. In addition, the entrance to the facility was improved to bring it into compliance with current American Disability Act (ADA) guidelines.

The Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center upgrade was designed by Charles Walton and Associates and built by Delmac Construction.

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



To join Cerritos Neighborhood Watch, call the Cerritos Sheriff's Station/Community Safety Center at (562) 916-1266.