

### Beware the “Sorry, wrong address” line

Cerritos Sheriff’s deputies work hard to make the City a safe place to live and work. Clear evidence of this is their continuing efforts to reduce the residential burglary rate in every part of the Cerritos community. Although no one should let their guard down, residents should be glad to hear that residential burglaries declined during the first six months of this year by approximately 42 percent compared to 2013 figures (although there was a spike in cases last month).

While Sheriff’s deputies intend to keep the pressure on residential burglars as the year progresses, residents are encouraged to do their part as well. It is not feasible for patrolling deputies to keep a close eye on more than 15,000 homes located over eight square miles. Deputies need the help of alert residents who will quickly call the Sheriff’s dispatch center at (562) 860-0044 whenever they see suspicious people or cars in their neighborhood. As our Community Safety Division staff is always reminding people, and as

emphasized in last month’s newsletter, ***If You See Something, Say Something***.

A good example of this occurred last month as deputies were investigating a burglary on Bertha Place. When deputies canvassed the area, they located a nearby resident who most likely spoke to the two burglary suspects earlier in the day. According to the individual, at approximately 11 a.m. his doorbell rang and he answered the front door. Upon opening the door, he observed two young men whom he did not know and did not recognize from his neighborhood. Upon seeing the resident, one of the men immediately stated, “Sorry, wrong address,” and both turned and quickly left. When the resident’s neighbor two houses away came home a few hours later, he found his residence ransacked and thousands of dollars in jewelry stolen.

This is the classic strategy used by “knock-knock” burglars who can be found in just about every community in Southern California and

who periodically prey on Cerritos residents. They work in teams, may be male or female, and are often members of urban street gangs. When someone does answer the door, the would-be burglars claim to be looking for a lost dog or a person the homeowner has never heard of, or they will offer some other ruse. This common technique is simply to determine if anyone is at home and, if they are, the burglar has a rehearsed response ready. However, if no one answers, the burglar goes through or over a side gate (sometimes the front door is kicked open), pries open a rear window, lets his or her accomplices inside the home and quickly ransacks the place.

If you see someone on your neighbor’s property who you are pretty certain doesn’t belong, or if you answer your door and get the “Sorry, wrong address” line, be suspicious, be observant and remember, ***If You See Something, Say Something***.

### Monthly Crime Summary: June 2014

There were 77 Part I felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff’s Station in June, an increase of eight felonies over the 69 reported in May. The following is a summary of the reports by category: four robberies; one sexual assault (reported in June, but occurring last February); 25 residential burglaries (five of which were attempts and more than double the 12 reported in May); 10 commercial/other structure burglaries; nine auto burglaries; five grand thefts; and 22 stolen vehicles (plus one attempt).

The spike in residential burglaries, roughly double the monthly average since the beginning of this year, is noteworthy and getting considerable attention from the Sheriff’s burglary suppression team. As with most felony crimes, residential burglaries were scattered throughout Cerritos, but did show a bit of a pattern in the southern portion of the city. Seven burglaries occurred within four or five blocks of Del Amo Boulevard between Pioneer Boulevard and Norwalk Boulevard. Thirteen of the burglaries,

including the seven just mentioned, occurred south of South Street between Studebaker Road and Carmenita Avenue.

#### Robberies

A street robbery occurred in the 16800 block of Gridley Road at approximately 1:30 a.m. on June 2. The victim was accosted while riding his bicycle home from work. The suspect jumped out of the bushes and pushed the victim off his bicycle. A struggle ensued and the suspect ran away without taking the bike.

Two juveniles were arrested for trying to extort money from two fellow students at Gahr High School. The weapon used was a threat to use bodily force and cause injury.

The other two robberies occurred on June 16 at the Wells Fargo Bank and the Chase Bank on South Street near Carmenita Road. At about 12:30 p.m., a lone suspect presented a note demanding money to a teller at the Wells Fargo Bank. The teller refused to give up any money and the suspect left. Approximately five minutes

later, a suspect (most likely the same person) walked into the nearby Chase bank and again presented a demand note. This time he succeeded and was handed approximately \$3,500 in cash. The case is being investigated by the Sheriff’s Major Crimes detectives and the FBI.

#### Aggravated Assaults

There was only one felony assault reported in June, and it was a sexual assault that allegedly occurred last February. A young teenage woman came to the Sheriff’s Station and told deputies that she had been assaulted at her Cerritos residence by a male acquaintance who was also a juvenile in his teens. The case is being investigated by the Sheriff’s Special Victims Unit.

#### Residential Burglaries

Along with car thefts, Cerritos residents saw a significant increase in home burglaries during June, with 20 reported and five attempted. Although these crimes occurred in various neighborhoods, there was some concentration in the

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## MONTHLY CRIME SUMMARY: June 2014

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southwest region of Cerritos south of South Street and primarily to the west of Bloomfield Avenue. As is usually the pattern, most residential burglaries occurred during daytime hours, Monday through Friday. Most points of entry were side and rear windows or sliders that were either pried open or broken in order to gain entry. The most common losses were laptop computers and jewelry.

Residents are strongly encouraged to consider installing a monitored alarm system if their residence is vacant during daytime hours. At most residential burglary locations, the home is ransacked, but on the rare occasion that a home with an alarm is entered, no ransacking takes place. Burglars do not want to be seen or detected and will quickly flee if an alarm is activated. The following is a list of reported residential burglaries in June.

- 13600 block Alderton Lane (attempt only, June 1)
- 12200 block Viarna Street (June 3)
- 20100 block Paseo Granada (June 3)
- 12200 block Viarna Street (June 4)
- 18700 block Stefani Avenue (June 4)
- 19700 block Nicholas Avenue (attempt only, June 6)
- 11000 block Bertha Place (June 6)
- 11500 block Bos Street (attempt only, June 6-7)
- 18500 block Santana Avenue (June 7-14)
- 20200 block Avenida Barcelona (attempt only, June 9)
- 12800 block Moorshire Drive (June 11)
- 17300 block Grayland Avenue (June 11)
- 12700 block Queensborough Street (June 11)
- 13200 block Hart Place (June 11)
- 19100 block Martha Avenue (June 11)
- 13300 block Bigelow Street (June 11-13)
- 18800 block De Voss Avenue (attempt only, June 12)
- 10700 block Reva Place (June 12)
- 17600 block Cortner Avenue (June 14)
- 13500 block Andy Street (June 21-25)
- 17200 block Evening Star (June 23-26)
- 20200 block Avenida Pamplona (June 24)
- 12200 block Yearling Place (June 25)
- 10600 block Rose Street (attempt only, June 29)
- 16400 block Bainbrook Avenue (June 30)

### Commercial/Other Structure Burglaries

There were 10 non-residential burglaries reported in June, the same number as the previous month. A detached garage was entered on Pioneer Boulevard and an iPad and gardening tools were stolen. A suspect shattered a window at the closed Target store on Bloomfield Avenue and stole cameras and headphones. Deputies responding to the alarm observed the suspect driving away. The suspect fled into Orange County where he was eventually located and arrested. Suspects were also arrested on two occasions at Walmart while exiting the store with various items. A locker break-in was reported at the LA Fitness on Alondra Boulevard. A lock was removed and the victim stated that his keys and wallet with \$800 cash were stolen. It is never a good idea to take valuables with you when exercising at a gym or park. Take only your workout gear, a lock and your driver's license (which you should consider leaving under your car's floor mat rather than in a locker).

### Grand Thefts

Reports of grand theft (more than \$950) dropped from 14 in May to five this past month. A guitar valued at \$1,700 went missing from Guitar Center and eight handbags were stolen at TJ Maxx by a thief who grabbed them from a rack and fled out a nearby door. Using a similar strategy, a male suspect picked up Legos and ran out of Toys 'R' Us to a waiting vehicle. A 61-year-old male resident fell victim to an "IRS" scam and lost \$1,250. He received a telephone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS who informed him that his tax return had been adjusted and that he needed to send money via a money card. He went to a 7-Eleven, bought cash cards and called the suspect back and provided the numbers on the cards. Needless to say, the caller was not from the IRS and the money is long gone. This is a good example of what not to do if you are contacted and presented with a situation where purchasing money cards is the required solution. No legitimate government agency will ever demand that you go to a store and purchase a cash card and provide the number. These scams are common, so tell your friends and family, especially those who are in

the frequently targeted senior citizen category, to be cautious and vigilant.

### Vehicle Burglaries

Vehicle burglaries declined from 13 in May to nine in June. This trend has continued since the beginning of the year, and through May vehicle burglaries have declined approximately 45 percent compared to 2013 year-to-date figures. Five of the nine vehicle burglaries occurred in commercial parking lots. On June 15, between 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., someone shattered a window on a PT Cruiser parked at the Los Cerritos Center and stole a purse with a wallet, driver's license and Social Security card. There are at least two lessons to learn from this incident. First, never leave a purse in a parked car in a commercial lot. Second, don't ever carry Social Security cards in your wallet. An identity thief with someone's original Social Security card can create a mess that will take a long time to clean up. Social Security cards should be kept in a safe and hard-to-find place in your residence, or, better yet, in a safety deposit box.

Other incidents involving property that shouldn't be left in cars included the following: a pick-up truck was broken into in the Home Depot lot on June 19 and a backpack with credit cards, a laptop and a cell phone were stolen; a laptop and iPod were stolen from a pick-up truck parked in front of a residence on Acoro Street; a door lock on a pick-up truck parked on San Gabriel Avenue was punched and a wallet was stolen; and someone visiting the Artesia Cemetery had a purse stolen from a Chevy pick-up truck.

### Vehicle Thefts

Auto thefts continued a gradual increase observed over the past few months, with 22 (and one attempt) reported in June. All of the stolen cars except one (in the 13400 block of Droxford Street) were taken from commercial parking lots at various hours and days of the week. Fourteen were older model Japanese makes (at least 10 years old), with Hondas being the most frequently stolen. Three vehicles were reported stolen from the Home Depot parking lot, two from Los Cerritos Center and two from the Target store on Bloomfield Avenue.

(562) 916-1266  
Cerritos Community Safety Division

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Cerritos Sheriff's Station

CERRITOS SHERIFF'S STATION  
COMMUNITY SAFETY CENTER

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