

Cerritos Neighborhood Watch Report

March 2014

Hardening the Target

Beware of distracted drivers

Preventing crime is far more effective than enforcing laws in keeping our communities and our residents safe. Among the safer living/crime prevention strategies that are strongly recommended are: immediately calling the Cerritos Sheriff's Station to report suspicious people or cars in your neighborhood; installing a monitored burglar alarm or owning a dog to sound an alert should intruders invade your home; and locking cars and keeping valuables out of sight (or out of the car whenever possible). It is also important to remember that the greatest threat to our residents' wallets and personal safety is not posed by the thieves who often find attractive targets in Cerritos. The more significant threat is when we get into our cars and hit the roads.

Although the figures vary somewhat depending upon the source, in

2011 there were about 32,000 fatal traffic collisions and 1.5 million injury collisions in the United States. In California that number was 2,835 fatal crashes and about 225,000 involving injuries. In 2013 Cerritos recorded 673 traffic collisions, with 216 involving injuries to motorists (including two fatalities). While the focus for decades was on the dangers posed by drunk drivers, over the past several years distracted drivers have become at least equally as dangerous.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, distracted drivers kill nine people in the United States every day. At least 1,000 more people are injured. The problem, as mentioned in a recent "Chicago Tribune" editorial, is due at least in part to the fact that new cars these days have become "smart phones on wheels." Drivers can use voice commands to operate electronic

devices, download songs, listen to text messages, and even order a pizza with the new Domino's Pizza app built into some cars.

You can reduce the risk posed by distracted drivers by practicing these safe driving strategies:

- Concentrate fully on your driving, and be an alert, defensive driver
- Avoid distractions and don't text or use a cell phone while driving
- Wear a seat belt at all times
- Obey the speed limit (speed is a leading cause of traffic collisions)
- Slow down in inclement weather
- Never drink and drive, or drive while sleepy or drowsy
- Don't follow the car ahead too closely, keep a safe distance

As the old "Hill Street Blues" watch sergeant always reminded his officers at roll call, "Let's be careful out there."

Monthly Crime Summary: February 2014

There were 70 Part 1 felony crimes reported to the Cerritos Sheriff's Department in February. This figure is a significant decrease from the 91 reported in January. Among the crimes reported were: four robberies; one aggravated assault; 13 residential burglaries (vs. 14 the previous month); 12 commercial/other burglaries, including one gym locker burglary; 19 vehicle burglaries (vs. 27 in January); 11 grand thefts; and 10 auto thefts.

Robberies

Four robberies were reported in February, and fortunately, none involved firearms. The first was a street

robbery that occurred on 166th Street near Shenandoah Avenue. A 17-year-old female was walking back from the Towne Center at about 7:20 p.m. when two male suspects ran up from behind and grabbed a bag containing her iPod and a coffee maker. Another street robbery was perpetrated by two young adult suspects on two male juveniles who were riding their skateboards on Bloomfield Avenue near 193rd Street. The suspects exited a black SUV, demanded the victims hand over their skateboards, and a struggle ensued resulting in the victims losing their skateboards. (A simi-

lar crime occurred a short time later in Hawaiian Gardens and one suspect was eventually identified and arrested by Buena Park police.) The Jamba Juice on South Street was robbed of about \$165 in cash by a male suspect who threatened an employee with a knife. The final robbery was a shoplift that escalated into a robbery when the suspect fought with Walmart loss prevention officers. Although he managed to escape, he was captured in the parking lot by responding Cerritos Sheriff's deputies.

Continued on other side

Monthly Crime Summary: February 2014

Continued from the other side

Aggravated Assaults

One felony assault was reported in February. A woman living on Village Drive called the Cerritos Sheriff's Station and reported that her boyfriend had choked her during an argument. Domestic violence and spousal assaults are felonies in California, resulting in the boyfriend going to jail.

Residential Burglaries

Thirteen residential burglaries were reported in February; one less than the previous month. In most of these crimes the suspect(s) entered a rear window, sliding door or side garage door. A suspect removed a rear window screen at a home on Windward Avenue and stole jewelry. A fingerprint was obtained during the investigation that led to the identification and arrest of the suspect. A laundry room door was left unlocked on Cantreice Lane and a suspect entered and took an iPad, a laptop computer and two bicycles. Another laptop was stolen on Anthony Drive when a thief entered an open garage door and took a computer from inside the garage. A side garage door was forced open on Buford Street and jewelry and \$900 in cash were removed from the residence. On Alexander Avenue women's undergarments were the target of a compulsive burglar who also happened to be a neighbor of the victim. The crime was solved when the victim observed the suspect with some of her stolen clothing and notified the Cerritos Sheriff's Station. Another solved burglary also occurred on Alexander Avenue. In this case the victim was able to identify the thief from video he obtained from the cameras mounted on the exterior of his property. The suspect was a former employee who left under less-than-pleasant circumstances.

Commercial/Other Structure Burglaries

Twelve commercial/structure burglaries occurred in February, including one locker burglary at the L.A. Fitness on Alondra Boulevard. On

South Street a suspect forced open a window on a construction trailer and stole a laptop computer. Two suspects entered the Jumbo Wok on Pioneer Boulevard and stole about \$215 from the cash register while restaurant employees were in the back of the establishment. Two generators were stolen from a construction site on Pioneer Boulevard. Someone attempted to pry a utility shed door at a business on Artesia Boulevard. A revolver was taken from a storage unit on Artesia Boulevard, and two pumps were stolen from a storage unit on Valley View Avenue. The front window of a restaurant on Bloomfield Avenue was smashed and \$1,460 in cash was stolen.

Vehicle Burglaries

There were 19 vehicle burglaries in February, a nice decline from the 27 reported the previous month. Of this number, 14 occurred in commercial or public parking lots and the other five in residential areas.

Early in the month the window of a Honda Fit was shattered at a shopping center on Norwalk Boulevard, but apparently nothing was stolen. On the same day a suspect broke into a delivery truck at the Los Cerritos Center and removed over 30 boxes of miscellaneous items, including clothing and perfume. A Nissan van in the office parking lot on Artesia Boulevard and Clarkdale Avenue was broken into and the thief stole a purse containing a wallet, driver's license, credit cards, and \$100 in cash. A suspect smashed the passenger window on a Honda that was parked near the Home Depot center on Alondra Boulevard and stole a backpack, wallet and \$155 in cash. On Studebaker Road near the auto mall a suspect shattered a passenger window of a Mustang and stole a laptop, a Kindle and a wallet. A purse, cell phone and credit cards were stolen from a Jeep Cherokee parked at the regional park on Bloomfield. A door lock was punched on a GMC Yukon parked at the Towne Center and clothing was stolen from the vehicle. At night thieves targeted an old Toyota

Tacoma and a new Cadillac SRX at the Home Depot lot. Backpacks were stolen from both vehicles.

Thieves also shattered the windows of five cars in residential areas. A backpack was stolen from a Honda Civic parked on Gerritt Avenue. A bag was stolen from a Dodge van parked on Darvalle Street. A Nissan Sentra's window was shattered on Palm Street, with no property stolen. Golf clubs were stolen from a Chevy Suburban parked on Plaza De Cordoba. School supplies were stolen from a Ford Expedition parked on Mapes Avenue.

Grand Thefts

There were 11 grand thefts in February, the first of which was a \$600 bike stolen near the Home Depot. The next day an employee at the Jersey Gold Car Wash on Pioneer Boulevard reported the loss of \$1,000 from a change machine. Electronic equipment valued at \$2,500 was stolen from an unlocked truck on South Street. Five tires were stolen from trucks parked on Arthur Street, and Charter Communications lost four cable amplifiers from parkway areas on Aclare Street, Cuesta Street, Glencreek Road and Hidden Ridge Lane. The tailgate of a Toyota pickup was stolen on 183rd Street. A shoplift suspect was apprehended at the Toys 'R' Us when he attempted to steal over \$18,000 in merchandise. And someone stole six iPhones from display tables at the mall's Apple store.

Vehicle Thefts

Nine vehicles were stolen in February, a considerable decline from the 19 the previous month. Two Saturns were stolen at the Towne Center. A Yamaha motorcycle was stolen from an apartment complex on Vickie Avenue. A flatbed truck was stolen on Artesia Boulevard, and a trailer was stolen from a business on Moore Street. A Honda Civic was stolen on Studebaker Road, another Civic on Beach Street and a third Civic from the Towne Center. The last vehicle reported was a Lexus stolen on Reva Street.

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.