

Crime data – the big picture

Author Ivan S. Turgenev wrote in his classic novel "Fathers and Sons:" "The drawing shows me at one glance what might be spread over ten pages in a book." That statement exemplifies what we intuitively know – the natural language of humankind is imagery. Images can be far richer in content than words. That is why viewing historical crime data on a spreadsheet can be informative, but it often lacks appeal, perspective and the emotional response needed to drive action. The website crimemapping.com solves that problem by extracting crime data directly from a law enforcement agency's record management systems (RMS) and then displaying that information in a visual format. The site allows visitors to see at a glance all of the reported crime in Cerritos, and surrounding areas, plotted on a digital street map. All crimes,

except those that require confidentiality, are posted on crimemapping.com within 48 hours of occurrence. The public no longer has to wait for City staff to publish weekly or monthly crime reports in order to learn of criminal activity in their area.

Crimemapping.com was developed by The Omega Group to help law enforcement agencies throughout North America provide the public with valuable information about recent crime activity in their neighborhoods. The company's goal is to assist police and sheriff's departments in reducing crime through a better-informed citizenry. Creating more self-reliance among community members is a great benefit to community oriented policing efforts everywhere and has been proven effective in combating crime.

Crimemapping.com uses different types of icons to depict various types of crimes. The icons appear on the map where the crime occurred. Clicking on a particular icon reveals additional information about that specific crime.

As previously mentioned, the term "Hardening the Target" simply refers to strengthening the security of a building or object of attack in order to prevent or minimize damage or loss. The first step toward "Hardening the Target" is realizing that the target (your residence or business) needs to be hardened. Please take a moment to visit crimemapping.com to see how active criminals have been in your area. Then avoid becoming an icon on that map by taking steps to "Harden the Target." Remember that safety is no accident.

Monthly Crime Summary: August 2015

The crime rate in Los Angeles and Orange counties continues to surge. The Los Angeles Police Department reports that 74,741 Part I crimes occurred in the City year-to-date. That number represents a 12.8 percent increase compared to the same period last year. Violent Part I crimes in the City of Los Angeles are up 20.3 percent from the same period last year and Part I property crime is up 11 percent (59,180 reported incidents year-to-date). The City of Diamond Bar has experienced a 23 percent increase in residential burglaries year-to-date (111 reported incidents) when compared to the same period last year. The Huntington Beach Police Department reports an increase of 13.7 percent in residential burglaries year-to-date (292 reported events) and the Anaheim Police Department reports that overall Part I crime has increased 20 percent year-to-date (6,587 reported incidents) compared to the same period last year.

Like other cities in the region, the total Part I crime rate in Cerritos is also trending up. The City's crime rate is being driven up by the commission of property crimes. Fortunately, most property crimes can be prevented as they are generally opportunity driven. Those who avoid providing criminals with opportunities are significantly less likely to become victims.

Cerritos continues to be a safe city with few reported violent crimes per capita. Since the beginning of the year there have been 55 violent Part I crimes reported in the City compared to 49 violent Part I crimes reported last year. Eleven of the violent Part I crimes reported this year (20 percent) occurred as a result of shoplifters using force against loss prevention officers. Shoplifters who use force during the commission of their crime elevate the crime from theft (shoplifting) to robbery. Historically, combative shoplifters elevate the City's violent Part I crime rate by 30 to 35 percent.

Although the City's crime rate has not come close to the levels from nine years ago, the upward trend is concerning and should inspire us all to be more proactive.

Robberies

In August there was one reported armed robbery (weapon used) and three reported "strong-arm" robberies (physical force used). Year-to-date there have been a total of 30 robberies reported in the City, compared to 32 robberies reported last year during the same time period (a 6.2 percent reduction). During the 2015 calendar year there have been a total of 12 armed robberies and 18 strong-arm robberies.

One of the strong-arm robberies occurred at a large retail hardware store. A shoplifter entered the store and concealed merchandise in his pants. The suspect then transferred the merchandise into a store shopping bag before leaving the premises without paying for the items. When the store's loss prevention officers attempted to detain the suspect, he punched one of them and fled the area. The suspect was located by deputies and arrested.

Another strong-arm robbery occurred at a large retail department store. The shoplifter entered the store and concealed merchandise in his pants before leaving the premises without paying for the items. The suspect fought with the store's loss prevention officers when they detained him.

The third strong-arm robbery occurred at the Los Cerritos Center. A male employee at the mall was leaving work when he was approached by a male suspect. The suspect insulted him and then "sucker punched" the victim in the face without provocation. The suspect then stole the victim's cellular phone. Deputies have identified the suspect.

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leaving the premises without paying for the items. When the store's loss prevention officers attempted to detain him, the shoplifter started to fight with them. At that time a second suspect drove up and rescued the shoplifter by simulating that he was in possession of a gun. The suspects escaped.

Aggravated Assaults

Aggravated assaults continue to trend up in Los Angeles County and in Cerritos. The Los Angeles Police Department reports a 25.8 percent increase in aggravated assaults year-to-date (8,484 reported incidents). This month there were three aggravated assaults reported in Cerritos. At the end of August, 21 aggravated assaults were reported in the City compared to 14 assaults reported last year during the same time period.

One assault occurred at a residence when a couple got into a verbal argument that escalated into a physical altercation. Both parties were arrested.

Another assault occurred at a residence when an acquaintance attempted to strike the resident with a hammer. The suspect was arrested.

The third assault occurred at a gas station when the victim stopped to put air in the tires of his vehicle. The suspect came riding by on a skateboard and yelled an offensive remark to the victim's girlfriend in the vehicle. A heated argument ensued and the skateboarding suspect struck the victim in the face with his fist.

Residential Burglaries

Residential burglars continue to plague Los Angeles and Orange counties. Most cities in the region are reporting an increase in their burglary crime rate, and Cerritos is no exception. There were 25 residential burglaries reported in the City this month, the second highest monthly total for the year. There have been 160 residential burglaries reported in the City year-to-date, an increase of 41.5 percent compared to the same period last year. Recently, deputies arrested criminals operating in the City who lived in Beaumont. When the suspects were interviewed, they admitted to researching Cerritos on the Internet and then deliberately driving to the city to commit crimes because they knew Cerritos was a prosperous area.

An analytical review of this month's residential burglary data revealed that eight homes were burglarized on the weekend; burglars entered 14 homes via an open window or unlocked door; and burglars entered the residences via the backyard on 15 occasions.

Most residential burglars can be deterred with simple prevention efforts. The best way to prevent residential burglaries is to lock your doors and windows, make your house appear to be occupied, install a burglar alarm and participate in a neighborhood watch program. Don't wait until you are victimized before you take action. "Harden the Target" now and avoid the drama later. For more information on how to repel burglars, visit safercerritos.com.

Commercial/Other Structure Burglaries

There were 10 burglaries in this category during the month of August. The total number of commercial/other structure burglaries is 81 year-to-date, up 9.4 percent from last year. Eight burglaries involved businesses and two burglaries involved storage sheds. Only three of these burglaries were known to have occurred on the weekend. Burglars stole everything from business supplies to copper wiring out of the walls. Several locations were spared from significant loss because their burglar alarm was activated.

Vehicle Burglaries

There have been 232 reported vehicle burglaries in the City year-to-date, an increase of 68.1 percent from last year. This month, 33 motorists were victimized after leaving valuable property in plain view in their vehicles. Regrettably, this month's vehicle burglary victims did not learn the "lessons" conveyed to the 199 victim-motorists that preceded them this year. The best way to avoid having your vehicle damaged and your property stolen is to keep items of value out of plain view; it's just that simple. If you drive a late model SUV, please be warned that criminals are still breaking into SUVs and stealing third row seats. If you have a third row seat in your SUV, you can minimize the chance of having it stolen by attaching a cable lock to the seat's frame and floor mounting bracket. There were three third row seats stolen from SUVs in Cerritos this month.

Grand Theft Auto

Stealing automobiles is a lucrative business for criminals. According to FBI statistics, there were 699,594 automobiles stolen in the United States during 2013, and California leads the nation in the number of reported stolen vehicles.

Stealing automobiles is another form of property crime, and most property crimes are trending up throughout the region. The Los Angeles Police Department reports that 10,142 vehicles have been stolen from the city year-to-date, an increase of 18.5 percent from last year. Vehicle thefts are also up in Cerritos. There were 22 vehicles stolen from the City this month. Since the beginning of the year, 138 vehicles have been stolen in Cerritos, an increase of 22.1 percent compared to last year. An analysis of this month's crime data reveals that eight vehicles were stolen from residences and only four vehicles were stolen during the weekend. Late 1995 to 2008 Honda Accords and Civics remain the principal targets of car thieves.

Fraud

Fraud related crimes still persist. There have been 56 "fraud/non-sufficient funds" crimes reported in the City year-to-date. One such fraud was perpetrated when a Cerritos resident (victim) placed an ad on "Amazon" to sell a tablet computer. After posting the ad, the victim received an email from a "marketplace.amazon.com" account. The would-be purchaser (suspect) requested to see a picture of the tablet computer. Two hours after the pictures were sent, the victim received an email from "Amazon Market Place" reporting that payment for the tablet computer had been received. The email also provided instructions on where to ship the tablet computer. The victim shipped the tablet computer as instructed and subsequently learned that the money was never deposited to his account. When the victim called Amazon, he was informed that he had been defrauded.

When conducting business on the Internet, always confirm that the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address listed at the top of the webpage matches the website that you want to be at. The URL serves as the unique address for each specific website.

(562) 916-1266
Cerritos Community Safety Division

(562) 860-0044
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.