

Neighborhood Watch crime deterrent

by SCOTT NEWTON
Staff writer

Many people have the attitude that if a burglar really wants to enter their home, there is little they can do to keep him out.

Mark White, police officer for the Sandy police department, disagrees. "It's amazing how many inexpensive things you can do to make your house unattractive to burglars," White said.

White and Officer Kelly Adovnik serve double duty as patrolmen and crime prevention officers. Five signs have already gone up marking neighborhoods as participants in the fight against crime.

One unique feature of Sandy's program is that once a neighborhood meets certain criteria, the city of Sandy buys and installs the sign.

White said they have only scratched the surface of crime prevention, estimating they have worked with less than 5 percent of the people in Sandy. He believes the program has a good deal of potential.

"Studies show that crime can be more effectively reduced through crime prevention programs than by adding patrol officers or making other changes," White said.

Securing one's home ranges from concepts as simple as securing doors and windows to purchasing burglar alarms.

White said he has seen places where burglars have gone from a house with dead bolts and secured windows to one next door where entry was easier.

Landscaping and lighting are other areas where police can offer advice.

About a year ago White and Adovnik attended a two-week academy on crime prevention. "I'm not an expert on burglar alarms," White said, "but I've got some ideas."

The police department has an engraver, and they advise people to mark all valuables with their Oregon driver's license number. Police can offer advice on how to best mark jewelry, cameras and electronic equipment.

White said they have access to driver's license numbers, and can determine quickly if property has been stolen when it is so marked.

Marked items are also harder for criminals to sell, White said. "I've talked to burglars," White said. "Marking property is a deterrent. Pawnshop owners don't want a Sony TV with numbers on it."

The most important part of the Neighborhood Watch program may be that it brings neighbors closer



Neighborhood Watch signs have begun to show up in Sandy as the police work to promote the program. Officer

Mark White is pictured above.

Photo by Scott Newton

together. "I've had people say they feel better about their neighbors, that they've made some friends," White said.

Police prefer that someone willing to take an active role organize Neighborhood Watch programs. The police will give that person copies of a letter they can distribute to neighbors. The letter helps break the ice and explains the program.

To qualify for a Neighborhood

Watch sign, a majority of people in a neighborhood must participate. Also, residents must mark their belongings.

Individuals receive a sticker announcing that they belong to the program, and they are advised to place it somewhere visible.

Neighborhood Watch encourages people to be involved, to notice new cars in the neighborhood or sounds that are unusual.

White said it is important that people call the police to tell them of unusual activity. He added they are regularly told about suspicious activity after a crime has been committed.

"That's what 9-1-1 is for," White said. "We want people to call."

Sandy police are available to make Neighborhood Watch presentations and to do individual home security surveys. For more information, call 668-5566.

Teachers to distribute information on drugs

Teachers from the Sandy Elementary School District will distribute flyers next week that contain hints for parents in dealing with drug awareness.

The flyer is the third in a year-long series of informational flyers dealing with education-related topics. The teachers decided to donate the flyers because it is proven high parental interest affects student success in the classroom.

Janice Craig, a first grade teacher and president of the Sandy Elementary Teachers Association, said "This is a continuation of a long-term working relationship with parents."

"We plan to distribute more tips to parents on a variety of topics

throughout the school year. This flyer seems particularly appropriate now since there is so much concern on this topic. We feel the flyer will support the work being done by our parent-teacher clubs in developing a drug education program."

The teachers earlier distributed flyers on "Halloween Safety" and "Holiday Gift Ideas" for students. Future flyers will deal with parent-teacher conferences, television viewing and summer activity suggestions as well as other topics.

The Sandy Elementary Teachers Association is a member of the East County Bargaining Council.

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Sheriff

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shifts is not the most flexible way to manage resources, Brooks said, adding that all law enforcement agencies are being forced to do a better job with fewer resources.

There are now five "roll calls" instead of three, and there are two-hour overlaps on many shifts.

The Sandy area is unique because it is in the center of three different patrol "districts." At any one time, Brooks said, there could be as many as seven cars in the Sandy area. One would be a training patrol, and another a supervisor's car.

Brooks said he once received a call from a friend in Boring who had just driven back from Bend.

"He said he saw five patrol cars between Rhododendron and Boring and he wanted to know if that was possible," Brooks said with a laugh.

Brooks said the method of staffing was not the only factor that allowed the sheriff's office to hold down increases in major crime.

"Our people work hard, and they work as a team," he said. "That makes a difference."

The yearly report was not all good. There was a 3.1 percent increase in property crimes, which was offset by a decrease of 7.4 percent in crimes against people. Overall, major crime was up 1.9 percent.

But Brooks said he was pleased

with the 37 percent recovery rate for stolen property. The sheriff's office recovered \$3 million out of \$7.6 million worth of property that was stolen or vandalized.

"In 35 years of law enforcement, I've never seen the recovery rate approach 40 percent," he said. "I've seen it at 23 or 24 percent, but not 37 percent."

Brooks said more people are engraving possessions with an Oregon driver's license number. The county has a "very aggressive" crime prevention program, he said. Three officers spoke to 21,000 people in 1985, Brooks said.

Information sought on vandalism

A vandal or vandals did about \$1,400 worth of damage to cars in the Davis Street, Davis Drive and Wolf Drive area of Sandy between midnight and 7 a.m. the morning of Jan. 31.

The windows of seven cars were

broken out with a club or other device, according to Sandy police.

Police are asking that any witnesses call the police station at 668-5566. The vandalism may have been related to another spree a few weeks ago, when business and

residential windows were broken out.

On Oct. 31, according to a police report, Michael Ray Haggstrom, 20, of Corbett, was cited for DUI, driving with a suspended license and attempting to elude law enforcement officials.

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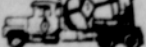
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