

AUGUST 2013

Quarterly Community Newsletter

GOOD NEWS – GOOD NEWS

On July 18th, Hemet Police Department (HPD) Chief David Brown and California Highway Patrol (CHP) Captain Gregory Peck announced that the CHP Officers would begin patrolling Hemet's Highway 74 (we know it as Florida Avenue) on July 22nd.

Now, the Highway Patrol cars are cruising Florida Ave. from California Street (on the west side of town) to Lake Street (on the east side of town). They are spending 10 hours on Florida Avenue each week day and sporadic hours on the avenue each weekend. As traffic enforcement is increased and recognized by citizens, we will experience improved traffic safety, reduced injury crashes, increased police presence and visibility. That, hopefully, means...we will see vehicle drivers respecting speed limits, obeying the red and green light traffic signals and – pedestrians will be using crosswalks – instead of jaywalking across Florida Avenue anywhere they please. Florida Avenue will be safer for everyone to walk on or drive on as we work together to slow down and obey the laws.

Why is this happening? Well, when the recession hit the country in 2007, we had about 90 sworn officers on the Hemet Police staff. Then, the City had to cut the budget. Now, we have only about 60 sworn officers on the HPD staff. Why did this create such a big problem?

In 2007 our City population was 71, 705 – now we have 81,xxx City population (this is just in Hemet – it does not include the population increase in the City of San Jacinto or the County areas that surround the City.

Since 2007, our officer count has gone down, our population count has gone up dramatically and we've seen a slight rise in crime rates – particularly in property crimes. Historically, property crimes have always gone up after a recession. But because of our traditional population (we were mostly farmers and retirees) we, here in the Valley didn't really notice an up-tick in crimes that much after a recession. Now however – in the last few years, our population has changed dramatically and so have our living situations and conditions. That's why it is so important that the CHP is assisting our patrols so the patrol officers can concentrate on being more proactive. Because of the partnership with the CHP,

our HPD Officers can now spend more time working in other parts of town. And maybe we can bring crime down.

Another Bit of Good News And An Alert.

An expert in collecting and reporting data at the HPD Main Station has told us – that while comparing crime statistics for the first half of this year with last year – he learned that crimes against people have gone down a bit on average from last year. That’s good news!!

However, crimes against property have gone up. That tells us crimes in this Valley are all about our money. Not a surprise – because the unemployment rate here in the Valley is higher than elsewhere in the county. The bad guys can’t find work here so they take our stuff. That also tells us we need to be more alert, more aware and more consistent in our practices of safety and security to protect ourselves, our family, our homes and our property.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

RECOGNIZING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

There’s a lot you and your neighbors can do to build a better, safer community – a community that won’t attract or sustain crime. Your police are not an army. They cannot be everywhere all the time. So they need you as a partner. Not a “strong arm of the law” partner, but rather a partner who will advise them of unusual or suspicious activities going on in your neighborhood. A partner who will be the EYES, EARS, and sometimes NOSE for them. Recognizing suspicious behaviors or activities and then calling your partner, the police, can stop crime in its tracks. Recognizing suspicious behavior/activities begins by knowing your neighbors and becoming accustomed to the normal routines and activities, until they become ordinary. That way, anything out-of-the-ordinary will attract your attention.

If you observe activity or actions that appear out-of-the-ordinary and look suspiciously like they may be threatening to property or people (like a crime in progress) as a partner, your commitment is to call 9-1-1 and report what you see, hear or sometimes smell.

Following is a list of some possible suspicious behaviors and/or criminal activities that should draw your attention:

Observation	Possible Crime
Screams	- Robbery - Physical Abuse - Medical Emergency - Rape - Fire
Someone looking into a home’s windows.	- Burglary
Someone looking into a parked vehicle.	- Vehicle Theft - Burglary

Observation	Possible Crime
Someone (not a postal Employee) looking into a mailbox.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mail Theft - ID Theft
Someone (not a City worker) looking into trash containers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ID Theft
Sounds of breaking glass.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burglary - Vandalism - Accident
Someone loitering around parks, school grounds, your house watching children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sex Offender - Drug Sales - Arson - Burglary
Someone in street clothes running, especially if something of value is being carried.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burglary
Someone selling products from the trunk or back of a vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stolen Goods - Selling without a License.
Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gangs in the neighborhood. <p style="text-align: center;">CALL 951 765-2309 to Report.</p>
Someone removing furnishings from home while owner is away.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burglary
Someone being forced into a vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kidnap - Rape - Child Molester
Open or broken windows or doors at a closed business or unoccupied residence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burglary (do not enter. Burglary may still be in progress.)
Teens strolling in a gated senior community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burglary - Gang Activity
Strange odor in the air.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gas Leak - Meth Lab
Telephone calls or "salesmen" at your door asking about your neighbors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burglary - Scams and Fraud

Observation	Possible Crime
Running, especially at night for no apparent reason. Gun shots.	- Possible subject fleeing from Scene of crime. - Celebration - Shooting
Vehicle in unusually bad condition, with signs of a recent accident, broken windows or bullet holes.	- Possibly involved in hit & run accident. - Drive-by Shooting
Abandoned vehicle parked on the block for several days.	- Stolen vehicle
A home has frequent visitors at all times of day or night that stay only a few minutes.	- Drug sales - Prostitution
Occupants unfriendly, suspicious, paranoid, odd behavior. House has extensive security, chemical odors, trash contains numerous bottles, containers & materials stained with chemicals.	- Drug Lab

THE LIST IS ENDLESS!!

Remember, even though circumstances such as these may indicate nothing criminal – (the drug sales may be an Avon Lady) – the police are trained and paid to make that determination.

~ ~ ~
 TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS
 CALL IMMEDIATELY!!
 DON'T HESITATE!

Emergency – 9-1-1

Query/Report – 765-2400

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

HOME SECURITY SURVEY
SAFE PRACTICES

1. Do you keep your doors locked whether you are in your house or out of it? In California, 50% of all burglaries occur when a burglar simply opens a door and walks in.

2. Are the locks on your security door, screen door, front door, back door, sliding glass door and garage door working properly and adequate? Do the locks need to be upgraded, added to or reinforced?
3. Are your windows protected only by the locks the manufacturer supplied? Often these locks can easily be manipulated.
4. Do you have an alarm system? Does the sign outside your home advertise the manufacturer's name? This is not a good idea. A sign can help, but not if the manufacturer's name is on it.
5. Do you keep a list of all your property? Is it up-to-date? Do you keep an additional copy someplace else?
6. Have you engraved valuable properties – such as your computer equipment, TV's, VCR's, tools, vehicles, boats or sports equipment?
7. Do you avoid unnecessary display of your valuables?
8. Do you keep valuables in your master bedroom? Not a wise idea. The master bedroom is a burglar's first destination.
9. Do you have a plan so you do not need to "hide" a key under your door mat?
10. Do you know what to do if you discover a burglar breaking in, or already in your house?
11. Do you know to leave the house undisturbed and call the Police Department if you discover a burglary has been committed?
12. Do you know there are bushes and shrubs that can help protect your house? Are other bushes, shrubs and trees on your property trimmed to eliminate hiding places?
13. Are lights installed around the outside perimeter of your house?
14. Do you know your neighbors? Can you recognize them as people living in a house near you?
15. Do you and your neighbors have a phone network so you may alert each other to suspicious activities or during an emergency?
16. Do you close your windows, take your key out of the ignition and lock your vehicle when it is parked in your driveway or in your garage?
17. Can you trust your neighbor to pick up papers, mail or packages in front of your home while you are away?
18. Would you do the same for them?

19. Do you know who and how to call for help in case of an emergency?

20. Do you have a block plan if we have a disastrous earthquake? Could you work with your neighbors to protect your lives and your property?

The Neighborhood Watch Team can help you with all of these things and more. Call us and we can come out to your neighborhood, church, club meeting or where ever you and your friends gather.

CITIZENS SHOULD NEVER PUT THEMSELVES IN THE PATH OF DANGER.

- Leave the responsibility of apprehending criminals to the police.
- Never directly confront a stranger if you do not have enough space to escape.
- Never challenge a group of people while you are alone.
- Never allow strangers to enter your home, unless you have invited them. If an unexpected stranger arrives at your home saying they represent a utility firm, the city or the police department, insist on seeing their ID. Then insist they remain outside, lock your door and phone whomever they said they represent to verify their story.
- Never be within arms-length of a vehicle when stopped to give information.
- Never take a personal risk to prevent a crime.
- Never consider using a weapon to defend yourself if you are not trained in its use and its maintenance.

GRANDMA/GRANDPA SCAM UPDATED

About 8-10 years ago we alerted you to what was called the "Grandma & Grandpa" scam. It was happening all across the country and was just so simple then.

Grandma or Grandpa would receive a telephone call, after dark. The caller, while crying, would say he/she was their grandchild. They would say "I'm in deep trouble and I need some cash right now. I do not want you to have to come out to help me or leave your home after dark. But, please just put some (amount of cash) in your mail box and my friend will pick it up."

Of course, Grandma or Grandpa wanted to help their loved ones. So they did whatever they could to help in an emergency. As a result, unfortunately, the scam was very successful and it has grown and grown.

At first, criminals often targeted mostly older people, but now, anyone of any age can be a target, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and school mates. Now, it's easier for criminals to learn more about us. They look at social networks because more people are sharing personal information online. They look at newspapers for articles about weddings, anniversaries, special events and obituaries. All these things provide detailed relationship information.

Now, scammers don't just use telephones, they also target victims through email as well. Now, they don't just pretend to be crying grandchildren – they also impersonate doctors, attorneys, foreign embassy officials, police officers and bail bondsmen to help them create a sense of legal urgency. They fake background noises to give you a sense of reality and emergency. They do everything they can to make you believe what they are telling you – so you will respond immediately. So you will quickly get in your vehicle, drive to the closest Western Union office and wire money all over the world to save your relative or friend.

Avoid Becoming a Victim! If you receive one of these calls or emails, we suggest you consider these steps before you drive to Western Union to send money.

1. When you receive this kind of phone call or email, record all the information you are given. When you hang up the phone or print your message, - take a few minutes to review all of the written material. Ask yourself: Does all this really make sense? - Can you verify the emergency?
2. If you have the telephone number of the person who is supposed to be in trouble (not the number given to you by the caller) call the number you had before. Or, call their parents, their other family members or mutual friends and find out if they are aware of this situation.
3. If your family members or friends tell you the problem does not exist and the request for money is a fake, contact the police and make a report immediately.
4. Always be suspicious of requests to rush and send money to help a family member or friend. Unless you can verify the information you've been given 100%, DO NOT send the money.
5. If you already sent money through Western Union and then learned it was a scam, call Western Union Fraud Hotline at 1-800-448-1492. If the transaction has not yet been completed, you will be refunded.
6. For more information on scams or tips on how to protect yourself, visit – www.westernunion.com/stopfraud.

New Scam – Be Aware.

We were advised of a new scam that is being perpetrated back East. There is no doubt it will move across the country. Following is the message we received from the East Coast. Be alert – be aware and be careful if you receive this kind of call.

There is a new and clever credit card scam. Someone it happened to says it works like this:

Wednesday a week ago, I had a phone call from someone who said that he was from some outfit called "Express Couriers" asking if I was going to be home because there was a package for me, and the caller said that the delivery would arrive at my home in roughly an hour. And sure enough, about an hour later, a uniformed delivery man turned up with a beautiful basket of flowers and wine. I was very surprised since it did not involve any special occasion or holiday and I certainly didn't expect anything like it. Intrigued about who would send me such a gift - I inquired as to who the sender is. The delivery man's reply was, he was only delivering the gift package, but allegedly a card was being sent separately - (the card has never arrived!). There was also a consignment note with the gift.

He then went on to explain that because the gift contained alcohol, there was a \$3.50 delivery charge" as proof that he had actually delivered the package to an adult and not just left it on the doorstep where it could be stolen or taken by anyone.

This sounded logical and I offered to pay him cash. He then said that the company required the payment to be by credit or debit card only so that everything is properly accounted for.

My husband, who by this time was standing beside me, pulled his wallet out of his pocket with the credit/debit card, and 'John', the "delivery man", asked my husband to swipe the card on the small mobile card machine which had a small screen and keypad where Frank was also asked to enter the card's PIN and security number. A receipt was printed out and given to us.

To our horrible surprise, between Thursday and the following Monday, \$4,000 had been charged/withdrawn from our credit/debit account at various ATM machines.

It appeared that somehow the "mobile credit card machine" which the delivery man carried now had all the info necessary to create a "dummy" card with all our card details after my husband swiped our card and entered the requested PIN and security number.

Upon finding out about the illegal transactions on our card, we immediately notified the bank which issued us the card, and our credit/debit account was closed.

We also personally went to the police, where it was confirmed that it is definitely a scam because several households had been similarly hit.

WARNING: Be wary of accepting any "surprise gift or package", which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package.

Also, never accept anything if you do not personally know or there is no proper identification of who the sender is. The only time you should give out personal credit/debit card information is when you yourself initiated the purchase or transaction!

Pass this on. It may just prevent someone else from being swindled.

STAY CONNECTED with the Hemet PD Quarterly Neighborhood Watch Newsletter!!

To START your e-mail Subscription:

Send an E-Mail to nmiller@cityofhemet.org with "Subscribe to Newsletter" in the Subject Line.

To CANCEL your Subscription:

Send an E-Mail to nmiller@cityofhemet.org with "Cancel Newsletter" in the Subject Line.

To EDIT your Subscription:

Send an E-Mail to nmiller@cityofhemet.org with "Edit E-Mail" in the Subject Line. Please include your new e-mail address in the e-mail.

To DOWNLOAD and/or view Newsletter from our Web-Site:

Go to www.hemetpolice.org then click **Community Services** then **Quarterly Newsletter**.

To RECEIVE TEXT and/or E-MAIL ALERTS from the Hemet Police Web-Site:

Go to <http://www.cityofhemet.org/list.aspx> then follow the 'NOTIFY ME' instructions. Select 'POLICE' under the NEWS FLASH HEADING.

To follow HEMET POLICE on FACEBOOK:

Go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hemet-Police-Department/509975339028943?ref=ts> and LIKE US!

*****As always, we will NEVER sell, loan, rent or otherwise share your personal information*****

HEMET POLICE WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

YOU HAVE A QUESTION? WE HAVE ANSWERS

Send your comments, suggestions, question, or just interesting thoughts to the Hemet Police Department. We might even publish them in a future edition of the Quarterly Newsletter. Reach us at:

**Hemet Police Department
Neighborhood Watch, R. Moyer
450 East Latham Avenue
Hemet, CA 92543**

**Phone
(951) 765-2415**

**E-Mail
rmoyer@cityofhemet.org**

**Fax
(951) 765-2412**