

Sugarmill Woods Bulletin

July 21, 2010

Dear Residents,

Over the past several weeks, a few residents have asked questions and expressed concerns about the apparent increase in reported crimes in the Sugarmill Woods Community. For those of you interested in the details, there is a link on the Citrus County Sheriff's web site at www.sheriffcitrus.org/ which describes a relatively new tracking system that has been in existence for about a year and a half.

It is called **Crime Mapping On Line**. The new interactive crime mapping application is accessible through the Sheriff's web site and allows you to find recent Citrus County criminal activity online. You can search by address to zero in on your neighborhood and also see a listing of reported criminal activity for the last three months. The direct link is www.crimemapping.com/map/fl/citruscounty.

For your convenience, I have summarized the number of reported crimes for the Sugarmill Woods Community area for the period from April 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010. Over that period, there have been 26 cases of reported crimes which include the following:

- 9 Theft / Larceny (5 Grand Theft of \$300 or more but less than \$5,000 and 4 Petit Theft)
- 6 Burglaries of a residence unoccupied or occupied
- 3 Vehicle Break In / Theft
- 2 Fraud
- 2 Assault
- 1 Drugs / Alcohol Violation
- 1 Vandalism
- 1 Motor Vehicle Theft
- 1 Sex Crime (Sell/Rent/Loan/Show Obscene Material to Minor)

For the period from July 1 through July 5, there have been 4 additional cases of reported crimes which include two (2) Burglaries, one (1) Drugs / Alcohol Violation, and one (1) Vandalism.

We all need to do our part to help reduce and eliminate crime in our community. Here is some helpful advice from the Citrus County Sheriff's Office.

In October, 2009 which happened to be National Crime Prevention Month, the Citrus County Sheriff's Office started offering a **"Free" Crime Prevention Survey** to homeowners throughout Citrus County. The initial response was poor to say the least back then but we can do better. Let me give you a brief summary of what the program is all about. I strongly recommend that you at least consider it.

The **Crime Prevention Survey** is conducted by a person from the Sheriff's Office who is a Certified Florida Crime Prevention Practitioner. The Sheriff's Office representative comes to your house and spends about an hour to an hour and a half surveying your home both inside and outside. The person reviews landscaping and shrubs around your home where intruders could hide and outside lighting which could help to deter intruders, checks doors and windows, locks, etc. and alarm systems. The person talks about Identity Theft and gives suggestions where and where not to hide things in your home. After completion of the survey, the homeowner is given a list of recommended changes to enhance the security of their home. The survey is free and it is voluntary if the homeowner makes all, some, or none of the suggested changes. It is your decision. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Sheriff's Office at 726-4488 and ask to schedule a Crime Prevention Survey.

The Sheriff's Office also emphasizes a slogan they have coined "**Lock It or Lose It**". Did you know the simple act of locking your car doors – something that takes less than 3 seconds – can prevent crime? According to the Sheriff's Office the number one crime we have in our otherwise safe community is burglary – incidents in which items are stolen from unlocked cars, open garages, unsecured homes and yards or other places in plain sight. As citizens of Citrus County, we can all partner with the Sheriff's Office to reduce crime and reduce our risk of becoming a victim.

Lock Up. Lock your car doors and keep them locked at all times – even when your car is sitting in the driveway. Lock your home and keep your garage doors shut.

Secure it. Hide items left in your car – or better yet, keep those items in your trunk. Don't leave valuables, such as bikes or golf clubs, in plain view. Keep household valuables in a safe place.

Be a good neighbor. Watch out for others and share these simple steps with them. Let your neighbors know if they have left something valuable outside or if they have accidentally left their garage door open.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to call the Sheriff's Office at 726-4488 and ask for Crime Prevention. They are eager to help you.

Last but not least, the **Sugarmill Woods Crime Watch** team which is a volunteer organization established by the Citrus County Sheriff's Office provides a free check service when you are away for extended periods of time. If you would like to take advantage of this service, just call the Citrus County Sheriff's Office at 746-3484 or 726-1121 after hours. Tell the Sheriff's Office representative that you are a resident of Sugarmill Woods and would like to have security checks made of your home by Sugarmill Woods Crime Watch during your absence. You will be asked a series of questions, such as, who has a key to your house? Will there be a car parked in the driveway and other pertinent information so that the Crime Watch officer will know what to expect when checking your house.

A form containing all this information is then sent to Sugarmill Woods Crime Watch and is placed in the daily security check log maintained by the organization. Any discrepancy encountered by a Crime Watch officer on patrol while performing a house check is immediately called in on the car radio and a Deputy Sheriff is dispatched to investigate. It takes about two weeks from the time you place that call until the final information is received by the SMW Crime Watch unit. So please plan ahead. Call the Sheriff's Office at least two weeks prior to your departure to ensure complete coverage during your absence.

Upon your return, please notify the Emergency Operations Center at 726-1121 so the Sheriff's Office can cancel security checks of your home. A house check is a courtesy of the Citrus County Sheriff's Office. Every effort will be made to check your home and Crime Watch in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office will report any unusual findings or crime. It does not preclude you from being a victim of crime and does not guarantee the safety of your home. The form for house checks can be found on the Sugarmill Woods Crime Watch web site at www.smwcw.org.

I hope this information has been helpful.

Sincerely,

Duane Dueker, President, Sugarmill Woods Civic Association

cc: Cypress Village POA, Oak Village Association, Southern Woods POA