

Police Chief warns residents to lock vehicles

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The La Porte Police Department is asking residents to help reduce the number of vehicle burglaries occurring in the city by being responsible and locking their vehicles.

According to La Porte Police Chief Ken Adcox, last month alone, there were approximately 20 reported vehicles burglaries within the city of La Porte.

"This represents a significant increase when compared to the same time period last year," Adcox said this week.

Some reasons for the up-surge may include the recent influx of non-residents in the bay area due to hurricane recovery efforts or even the national economic downturn, which is affecting most communities in the United States, Adcox added.

"However, the most disturbing news is that a vast majority of the vehicle burglaries occurring in our community could have easily been prevented," he stressed. "According to police statistics, at least 15 of the 20 vehicles that had property stolen from them had been left unlocked by their owners and nearly all of the vehicles had valuables inside that could be seen from outside the vehicle. Valuables left in unsecured vehicles included a lap-top computer, cell phones, wallets, credit cards, MP3 players, and even cash. Had these vehicles been secured, and items of value concealed or removed from inside the vehicle, these crimes may not have occurred."

According Adcox, the fact that 75 percent of these crimes could have been prevented through such simple target hardening measures is an important issue within our community, one that he contributes primarily to a complacency and a lack of awareness.

"While the La Porte Police Department remains totally committed to ensuring the safety and security of our community, every citizen must view themselves as 'co-producers' of public safety, doing their part to keep themselves from becoming a victim and assisting the police in anyway they can. This includes taking responsibility for locking the doors to one's vehicle and home, reporting suspicious activity, etc. Our first goal, as a community, is to prevent crime, before it happens. In order to be truly effective in preventing crime, we must work as a team."

By simply being cognizant and taking a few simple steps in securing personal property, the chances of becoming a victim of theft can be considerably reduced.

Things to remember include:

- **Lock Your Car.** Lock your vehicle and never leave your keys in your vehicle, even if you only plan on being gone for a short while. Close all windows, including vent or wing windows and sunroofs. Buy an alarm and use it. Many people believe that alarms no longer make a difference; however, they do remain an effective deterrent to a burglar.
- **Remove Valuables.** Avoid leaving anything of value in an unattended vehicle. Take valuable items inside with you or lock them in the trunk. If you must leave items in your vehicle, ensure that they are not visible from the outside of the vehicle. Also, do not forget your GPS systems, as these portable devices are easy targets for thieves.