

SCSO launches holiday safety and crime prevention campaign - 11/26/2013

SEMINOLE CO. (Nov. 26, 2012) – As we enter the holiday season, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) is reaching out to residents to help prevent residential and vehicle burglaries. Deputies and Citizens on Patrol (COPs) will be visiting neighborhoods across the county and going door to door to provide information on how to protect personal property and reduce the chance of becoming a burglary victim. Deputies will also conduct hundreds of vehicle safety checks, leaving courtesy notices on cars to let drivers know if they are at risk for a break in. The notices are designed to encourage drivers to lock their cars and avoid leaving valuables on display. In the weeks ahead, the Sheriff's Office is also conducting additional patrols at shopping centers and working with retailers to help them prevent criminal activity inside stores.

From Nov. 29 through Dec. 13, Seminole County's five movie theatres will air SCSO's public service announcement, a catchy spinoff on the "Sleigh Ride" Christmas carol that cautions holiday shoppers about vehicle burglaries. The one-minute video can be viewed on SCSO's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

SCSO encourages residents to follow these seasonal safety tips:

- If you're heading out of town for the holidays, be sure your home appears occupied. Place lights on timers, and ask your neighbor to park in your driveway and pick up mail. Request a free "House Watch" from the Sheriff's Office. While you're away, SCSO will send a deputy to regularly check on your home. Call 407-665-6650 to schedule this service.
- Never broadcast your upcoming travel plans on social media sites like Facebook or Twitter, and avoid the urge to "check in" at locations away from home.
- After the holidays, don't leave the empty boxes from TVs, electronics, and other new purchases by the curb. It could tip crooks off to the fact that pricey items are inside the home.
- Keep your home's drapes closed and blinds down. Avoid leaving wrapped presents in plain view where they can be seen from outside your residence.
- If you or your guests are parking in the driveway or on the street, be sure vehicles are always locked, and that valuables are removed. Crooks routinely smash windows to steal electronics, purses, phones, laptops, and other items left in plain view.