

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH INFORMATION MEETING

As many of you know we held a neighborhood watch meeting in early April as a result of thefts reported by some of our neighbors on Crooked Lake.

A lot of helpful information was shared with the Sheriff's Deputy and Conservation officer who attended the meeting. They are compiling all the information and now have a case file. We also learned that we are not being singled out as there are reports of thefts at other Steuben County lakes.

The law enforcement officers at the meeting shared the following information to help us all protect ourselves better:

1. It is most important that anyone immediately report criminal activity, suspicious people, or any other incident while it is happening, if that is possible – in that case, call 911 – do not call the general Steuben County dispatch line.
2. Please note it does not have to be a life-or-death situation to call 911, even if it is just a suspicious person or vehicle. At any time of day, 911 should be called so that immediate response can be made!
3. Communication amongst neighbors is key – if an email group or other sort of database can be kept, that would be optimal – in this way, if various neighbors see the same thing it will all be kept in one place and easily accessible so this information can be communicated to Law Enforcement.
4. If there are a group of thefts, suspicious activity or other crime in an area, be sure to contact not only the Steuben county Sheriff but the DNR Conservation Officer and the State Police – contacting all agencies will assure that they are aware of the criminal activity and are able to respond or investigate – if only one agency is contacted, that office does not generally report criminal activity to other law enforcement agencies.
5. Lights, locks, alarm systems, and cameras are invaluable – also, alarm company stickers and signage.
6. Make your house look lived-in even if you are not there during part of the year or even if you are there but go to work during the day.
7. Dogs are a deterrent.
8. Use simple home automation to rotate the turning on and off of lights.
9. It is advisable to do an inventory of anything and everything in your home that you consider valuable by taking photographs of the items and of the serial numbers with your cellphone.
10. If an item does not have a serial number, you can create a unique number and stamp it onto the piece of property and keep a record of that so that it can be identified if it is located later after a theft.
11. Anyone who chooses to sell items on-line should not arrange to meet the potential buyer at his/her property if possible. This is sometimes simply an attempt by the potential buyer to see what other items a person has and what his/her property looks like with respect to possible crime.