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SHEBOYGAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

Sheboygan Police and Explorers Working to Prevent Thefts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SHEBOYGAN – Sheboygan Police Explorers are launching a new program aimed at preventing thefts from vehicles.

The “Vehicle Courtesy Check” program will team up youth Law Enforcement Explorers with the department’s neighborhood officers and Explorer Advisors to inspect vehicles parked in public spaces. They will be looking for obvious risk factors of thefts such as unlocked doors, open windows, or valuable items like purses, GPS units, or cell phones left out in the open.

“Thefts from vehicles are one of the most prevalent types of theft, and the vast majority of those thefts involve items left in plain view inside of unlocked vehicles,” said Sheboygan Police Sergeant Kurt Zempel. “Our hope is that through the vehicle courtesy check program, we can reach out to community members and prevent them from becoming victims of theft,” he said.

Zempel said he sees the program as an opportunity to reinforce the crime prevention practices for those people who already are sure to secure their valuables and vehicles, as well as a way to discuss better prevention habits for owners of vehicles who fail the courtesy inspections.

Explorers will leave a courtesy check card on all inspected vehicles, thanking the owners of passing vehicles for their help in preventing crime and reminding owners of failing

vehicles that they can have an impact on their likelihood of victimization. Additionally, the neighborhood officer assigned to the area where inspections are conducted will be following up one-on-one with owners of failing vehicles to offer crime prevention tips.

“Ideally, the neighborhood officer will be able to get a hold of the owner right away to correct the risk factors on the spot and significantly reduce the chance of them being victimized by theft,” Zempel said. Otherwise, the neighborhood officer will try arranging a meeting or conversation with the owner at a different time to discuss the problems that were discovered on the vehicle inspection as well as other opportunities to strengthen their property’s resistance to crime.

Explorers will limit their vehicle inspections only to those vehicles which are parked on the street or in public parking lots, and will be based on the factors that are observable through the vehicle’s windows – pulling on door handles will not be necessary. Inspections will take place in the evening hours to help facilitate the most contacts with community members to reinforce the goal of preventing thefts, and will be conducted through the summer months when such thefts are most likely to occur as a means of helping deter crimes in targeted areas.

“We want members of the community to understand that they can play a huge part in helping reduce not only their own chances of being victimized, but also the occurrence of property crimes for the entire city,” Zempel said. “Last year, city residents experienced more than 150 thefts or attempted thefts from vehicles, and these are almost all crimes that could have been prevented,” he said. “A few simple steps aimed at prevention every time you get out of your vehicle can go a long way in improving public safety and the quality of life for all our residents.”

The inspections are slated to start in late July and continue through the summer.
