



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



Avoid Being A Victim – Join A Neighborhood Watch Today!

Neighborhood Watch has grown over the years from an "extra eyes and ears" crime prevention approach to a much more proactive, community-oriented endeavor providing a unique opportunity to bring together local law enforcement officials and citizens for the protection of their communities. Today's neighborhood watch groups incorporate activities that not only address crime prevention issues, but also restore pride and unity to a neighborhood. It is not uncommon to see members of neighborhood watch groups participating in activities that strive to improve the quality of life for community residents. "Organized neighborhood watch programs have proven to deter and detect criminal activity in our County," said Sheriff Jamie Patton. Deputies from the Sheriff's Office are available to help establish neighborhood watch programs, provide training, attend meetings to present information on current crime trends, and explain how to recognize and reporting suspicious activity, how to improve home security, and how to improve personal security.

Is your neighborhood safe? How well do you know your neighbors? Why is this a great time to join or start a neighborhood watch? Union County has experienced a recent rash of vehicle break-ins. An active neighborhood watch may help prevent or solve this type of crime. Most of these vehicle break ins do not involve smashed windows or picked locks. Just about all involve unlocked vehicles and occur overnight using the cover of darkness. The pattern for these crimes are very similar. The criminals sneak into a neighborhood in the dark and go from car to car to car, checking to see which vehicles are unlocked. When they find one unlocked, they quickly go through the consoles, glove boxes, and cargo areas taking any potential high value items. Recent break ins have resulted in the theft of cell phones, wallets, purses, back packs, laptop computers, handguns, money, and sunglasses. Many neighborhood watch groups have social media or email groups and share crime alerts from the Sheriff's Office to keep members informed and ask them to watch for potential criminal activity. "Our goal is to educate our communities to give them the tools to help keep each other safe," said Sheriff Patton.

Here are some simple tips you can follow to protect your vehicles:

- Lock your vehicles and take your keys with you. Every time, every trip, every time you stop.
- Make sure all the windows are all the way up.
- Park your vehicle in a garage, in view of a window, or in a well-lit area.
- Don't leave personal property of value in your vehicle.
- If you must leave items in your vehicle, hide them from plain view.

If you would like to start or join a neighborhood watch, please call the Union County Sheriff's Office at (937) 645-4100, Ext. 4331.