



Oak Park Police
Community Policing Newsletter
Zone 4
January-March 2009



*"Committed to
community,
integrity, and
excellence in
public safety"*

Resident Beat Officer: Robert Primak
Phone: 708.305.9780
Email: primak@oak-park.us

Zone 4 Borders:
Austin Blvd to Oak Park Ave.
Madison Street to South Blvd.

Community Meetings: Second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. at Percy Julian Middle School 416 S. Ridgeland Ave.

Happy New Year 2009

I would like to wish all the residents and business owners of Zone 4 a Happy New Year. I hope that everyone had an enjoyable and safe holiday season and I hope that 2009 will be a safe and prosperous year for all. Make crime prevention and getting involved one of your new year's resolutions.

Crime Prevention Tips

- Listen to your gut. If something feels wrong, it probably is.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Criminals watch for individuals who are distracted by cell phones and iPods.
- Look out for each other. This doesn't mean stepping into a criminal incident, but being willing to call police.
- Don't hesitate to call 9-1-1. Never worry about inconveniencing an officer. We would rather stop a crime than try to solve it after the fact.

Neighborhood crime maps online... Crimes reported by location are listed on maps posted daily on the Police Department section of the Village web site, www.oak-park.us/police. Maps are prepared each weekday by the Police Department's crime analyst and posted by date. The maps are Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files, which allow users to zoom in for a closer look at activity in particular neighborhoods. The main crime report page also provides definitions of crimes to help users understand classifications, as well as information on Resident Beat Officer (RBO) jurisdictions

Important Telephone Numbers

9-1-1 **Emergency**
708.386.2131 **to have an officer
dispatched in a non-
emergency situation**

708.386.3800 **for general information**

708.434.1636 **Crime Tip Hotline**

Please call the police and report any suspicious activity that you may observe. By working together we can make our community a safer place to live work and play.

Zone 4 Beat Meetings

The purpose of these meetings is to provide a forum where the residents and the police department can discuss issues in our specific zone that affect our quality of living. During these meetings we will be focusing on criminal activity in the beat, crime prevention, street safety, home security, as well as traffic and parking issues. The meetings are held at Percy Julian Middle School on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. Please stop by and find out what's going on in your neighborhood. I am also looking for block captains on each of the blocks in our zone. Contact me for additional information regarding block captains.

Abandoned/Vacant Property

If anyone has information regarding abandoned, vacant or foreclosed commercial buildings or residences, please contact me by telephone or e-mail.

If anyone has any questions, comments, concerns please contact me at primak@oak-park.us or my department cell phone 708.305.9780. If I am not working please leave me a voice mail and I will return the call as soon as possible.

Strong police, resident partnership key to fighting crime

By Rick C. Tanksley

Chief of Police

When it comes to fighting crime, the most valuable tool available to law enforcement is a public that is willing to get involved. Police simply cannot be everywhere, but residents can and are. And a resident knows when something is not right, whether it is on the block, in the alley or with a neighbor's garage.

Just knowing something isn't right is not enough, of course. You have to pick up a telephone and call police, an action, I am proud to say, many Oak Parkers always have been ready and willing to take. That's why crime in our community has remained at historic lows for more than a decade, even though little more than a narrow strip of pavement separates us from a crime-challenged part of the nation's third largest city.

But crime still does happen in Oak Park. And it only takes a few more incidents than usual to spur the headlines that can create a perception that is more powerful than the reality of the numbers.

When you examine the statistics, the vast majority of crimes in our community are against property — mostly garage and vehicle burglaries, and bicycle thefts. We do get a share of the more violent crimes, however, such as armed robberies that involve the threat of force. These are the crimes that, no matter how few, create a fear that makes victims of not just the person forced to hand over a wallet or purse at the end of a weapon, but everyone in the community.

Ironically, the very same things that make each of us want to live in Oak Park attract criminals, too. We are close to the city, are served by an extensive public transit network and have neighborhoods where property owners care for and invest in their properties. Criminals go where they are most likely to find things of value to take and like places where they can get in and out of in a hurry, criteria that Oak Park far exceeds.

Getting in and out in a hurry is especially important to criminals who target our Village. That's because Oak Park Police will be on the scene within about three minutes of an urgent 9-1-1 call. Such rapid response is why when the number of specific types of crimes increase, so do arrests, a connection that typically is overlooked in the rush to create the sky-is-falling crime news that makes for attention-grabbing headlines and puts fear in the hearts of many.

But when you peel back the sensationalism and look beyond the understandably emotional statements of individual victims of crime, Oak Park remains a very safe community in which to live as safe as it has ever been according to the statistics dating back to the early 1980s.

Do we face challenges? Absolutely. But we are a strong community with a rich history of working individually and collectively to make our Village the envy of the region. We don't need to change our lives and we don't need to be fearful. We just need to continue to work together. There are more of us than them, so let's use our numbers to put criminals where they belong — in the lock up at 123 Madison St.