

March 1, 2011

Dear Town of Rindge Residents:

I am writing this letter in order to ask for assistance from our residents. Over the last several years, we have been experiencing an increase in residential burglaries. Residential burglaries tend to increase during poor economic times. Now you combine a bad economy with an increase in illegal drugs, such as heroin, and prescription medication abuse on a rise across New Hampshire and Massachusetts you create a situation where people need to steal in order to support these dependencies and committing burglaries is one way they support these habits.

One of the major obstacles we have been finding during our investigations is that people have not been recording serial number, taking pictures or inscribing their property in order to identify items that have been lost or stolen to assist in recovering it.

It is very hard to track down TV's, stereos, laptops or other electronic devices when no serial numbers have been recorded. The recording of serial numbers also becomes very important when firearms are stolen. With serial numbers we can place stolen item into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) as well as into the State Fusion Centers which sets up data bases of information and stolen items. This is helpful in cases where items have been recovered in a number of ways such as arrest or recovered property in other towns or even other states.

Here in Rindge we have an unusual situation because we border Massachusetts and we have Routes 202 and 119 which lead into Massachusetts and are known as major drug corridors for the trafficking of illegal drugs to and from Massachusetts towns such as Fitchburg and Leominster.

We are working with many state and federal law enforcement agencies in order to track down and arrest people we suspect as being involved in these and other residential burglaries and will continue to do so in the future. But, we are also asking our community members to assist us in preventing these burglaries from occurring.

We are asking that individuals maintain information on their property by recording serial numbers and taking photos of their property. There are a number of ways to do this. You can simply take photos and record the serial numbers by hand or you can use programs on your computer such as Microsoft Office Excel and search for "Home Contents Inventory." This program gives you a template to use to record all the information you need to provide to police. Most insurance companies, as well, have templates which you can access either on line or by getting forms to fill out by hand.

Another way to assist in preventing residential burglaries is to install an alarm system with camera's such as ADT, Brinks or others local security vendors. The best system is a system that alerts a dispatch center instead of just a local audible tone which sounds just at the residence. These types of systems today are relatively cheap and can be installed on your own. For the more computer savvy individuals, you can even have your home security system set to alert you via computer or smart phone if and when an intrusion occurs at your home. Installing a security system also provides for a break in your overall home insurance cost.

Other very important ways to keep your home from being broken into is to get to know your neighbors and to look out for each other in the neighborhood. Make sure that when you leave for vacation your mail and newspaper deliveries are stopped while you are away or have someone pick it up daily and to check on the house while they pick it up for the duration of the time you are away.

If you do have an inventory either hand written or electronic versions make sure you keep a copy in another place such as at the office or a friend's house. I would not recommend keeping it only on your laptop or home computer in case these items are stolen. I would also offer the police department as a location for Rindge Residents to store and maintain an inventory of their property.

These are just some suggestions for you to consider for protecting your property. On March 15, 2011 at 7:15pm, the Rindge Police Department will be holding an informational meeting at the Rindge Community Center at Wellington Field to discuss the recent burglaries and to assist the community in answering question they may have in regards to home protection.

Thank you for your assistance with this very important issue and we look forward to seeing you on March 15, 2011.

Chief Michael J. Sielicki