

**CITY OF FONTANA
FONTANA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

TO: All attendees of the Sierra Lakes/Citrus Heights Community Meeting
FROM: George Bloom, Lieutenant
DATE: October 22, 2007

SUBJECT: Community Meeting Minutes of October 22, 2007

Played the Fontana Police Department Recruitment Video-Joinfontanapd.com

Lieutenant Bloom

- Introductions
- Advised he is currently the Area Commander for the Sierra Lakes/Citrus Heights Community and everything north of the 210 freeway. If you have any questions, call him at 350-7706 or e-mail him at gbloom@fontana.org.
- The police department has been really busy with the fires lately.
- For good information go www.Fontana.org, which is the city's website. The city's website has a link to the Police Department's website.
- Grand Openings: Coyote Canyon Park and also the Fire Station will be having the grand opening November 3rd.
- Community Clean up day is October 27, 2007- It's free to all Fontana City Residents only. You must bring you Burretec Refuse bill. The acceptable wastes are: refuse, appliances, sofas/mattresses, televisions/computer monitors, green waste, tires (limit 4), electronic waste, and hazardous waste. Be prepared to source separate your load. When loading your vehicle keep in mind that items such as metal, appliances, TV's, monitors, tires and household hazardous wastes will be off loaded at different locations. If items can be reused, please check with local thrift stores such as Goodwill or the Salvation Army to see if they will accept these items. For more information please call Public Works at (909) 350-6760.
- We have a new Verified Response policy and also a new Noise Ordinance. The new noise ordinance give the officers an option to issue a citation if they get a call at the same residence more than once regarding a noise complaint.
- Department and Area statistics:
 - Residential Burglaries for the last 6 months for the north end of Fontana are way down.
 - Vehicle Burglaries for last quarter were low but this quarter they are high. We had a string of vehicle burglaries at 24 Hour Fitness. On September 24th we caught a guy breaking into vehicles and he came from a group who was breaking into vehicles from Orange County to Barstow hitting all the 24 Hour Fitness's.
 - As for Robberies we didn't have any in September. Most of the robberies are bullies going to parks and stealing ipods.

- Vehicle thefts are about the same as last quarter. If you can park your vehicle in your garage or get an alarm.

Captain Alan Hostetter-Verified Response

- Effective October 1, 2007 the Fontana Police Department is changing their policy on how alarm calls are dealt with. As of today the Fontana Police Department responds to all alarms calls and many are false alarms. Starting October 1st we are going to what is called “Verified Response” (VR). Most alarms are motion censored and are set off by your dog, a balloon moving through your house or even the wind. What happens now with alarms is when an alarm is activated the alarm company usually calls you to see if you had accidentally set it off, if they can’t get any response they automatically call the police and we send officers out to the call and usually find out that it’s a false alarm.
- *What is Verified Response (VR)*-It places the responsibility on alarm owners/alarm company to ensure burglar alarms are “verified” before police are dispatched to the location.
- *What is considered a Verified Alarm*-Audio verification, video verification, verification by a security guard or an eye witness.
- *Why Verified Response*- In 1998 police in our nation responded to about 38 million alarm activations, which cost an estimated \$1.5 billion. In the United States solving the problem of false alarms would relieve 35,000 officers from providing an essentially private service. During the Fiscal year of 2005/2006 Fontana Police Department responded to 8,529 alarms, 8,507 (99.7%) of those alarms were false! Fontana spent \$255,603 responding to false alarms which is equivalent to having 2 officers doing nothing but responding to alarm calls. Out of the 22 calls which were not false we only made an arrest on one.
- *Attempted solutions*- Ordinance #1356 which was adopted on 08/07/01 was an attempt to relieve officers from responding to an increasing volume of false alarms. After the 3rd false alarm in 12 months a warning letter is issued, any false alarm after that is \$63. The city has also provided door hangers to educate violators. The result of this ordinance was an approximately 24% drop by 2004 and has remained stable since.
- *Where do we go from here*-The problem is clear and also thoroughly researched. Verified response has proven effective in a large and growing number of communities. We are expecting over a 90% decrease in false alarms using the VR approach. After 6 months we will review the ordinance and see how effective it was.
- *Know Jurisdictions using Verified Response*- Broomfield, CO; Fremont, CA; Ventura, CA; Turlock, CA; Modesto, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Eugene, OR; Lane County, OR; Westminster, CO; Burien, WA; Las Vegas, NV; Salem, OR; Arvada, CO; Henderson, NV; Winnipeg, Canada; Breckenridge, CO; Lakewood, CO; Aurora, CO; Dallas, TX; Salt Lake City, UT; Bellingham, WA; West Valley City, UT; Victoria, BC; Yakima, WA; Summit County, CO; South Salt Lake City, UT; and Madison, WI.
- *What our policy is*- If you have a verified alarm our dispatcher will take the information and dispatch at least two officers immediately. If the alarm is not verified our dispatcher will do a previous event search if there was no suspicious

activity within 72 hours the dispatcher will then send a message to officers in that area stating there is an unverified alarm, if no officers respond to check on the alarm the call is closed out after 15 minutes. If the previous event search shows suspicious activity within 72 hours then two officers will be dispatched to the location.

- *What your options are-* Get rid of your monitoring service and rely on signs and an audible alarm. Install a panic alarm, we will still respond immediately to those. Insist your monitoring company provide a verification service (security guard). Or install a verified alarm (audio or video).
- ***Frequently asked questions:***
 1. *Why doesn't the City just charge more for alarms and hire more officers?* This still puts a burden on the police department and the city (in regards to tracking, billing, and collecting) instead of the alarm owners and companies who are responsible for the problem. Also there are drawbacks on hiring officer through an unpredictable revenue stream.
 2. *Why don't we just charge the alarm companies for false alarms and let them collect from the customers?* Alarm companies have threatened litigation against this in the past. Most don't even track false alarm rates unless related to equipment failures. They would have to add new divisions to their organizational charts to deal with this and much like us, don't want to have to deal with the tracking, billing, or collecting on huge numbers of false alarms.
 3. *If you adopt this policy, will my homeowners insurance increase?* A common, yet completely false, scare tactic of alarm companies. Many insurance companies give discounts for alarms and a slightly larger discount for a "monitored" alarm. They are not concerned with who monitors the alarm or responds to check it.
 4. *Should we expect our burglary rate to increase?* No! This had not occurred in the other jurisdictions where VR had been adopted. Fontana should be no different. Considering that over 98% of alarms are false, there is no correlation between alarms and actual burglaries. Owning an alarm can be preventive, police officers responding to the sound of an alarm is not (typically a 15 to 20 minutes response time). Additional free time will be much more beneficial than responding to false alarms:
 - Focus on areas with higher burglary rates
 - Investigative vehicle and pedestrian stops
 - Parolee and probationer follow up
 - Focus on arrests of drug users
 5. *Will people become victimized in their own homes if you don't respond?* Burglar alarms are designed to protect property, not people. Manually activated alarms such as panic/duress alarms, robbery alarms, and medical aid alarms are designed to protect people. We will continue to respond to these alarms and they will continue to be given a high priority.
 6. *I pay my taxes and your salaries; I want my tax dollars being used to respond to my alarm.* The majority of homes in Fontana are not alarmed. The alarms we are responding to are almost always false. Automatic police response is a personal service to alarm owners that has become detrimental to public at

large. Owning and operating an alarm is a private contract with a private for-profit firm, for a private service.

- For more information please visit www.fontanapd.org.

THE ITEMS IN BOLD PRINT REFLECT ACTIONS TAKEN

Concerns of Sierra Lakes/Citrus Heights residents

- Advised his truck was broken into and his radio was taken, asked if we keep property when we find it. ***Lt. Bloom advised we try everything we can to trace it back to the original owner.***
- Asked if a victim of a theft can come into the police department to view found property. ***Lt. Bloom advised no.***
- Asked if a victim could call to describe the property. ***Lt. Bloom advised yes you can call our property department.***
- Advised there was a shooting in Sierra Lakes and was wondering if there was a description of the suspects. ***Lt. Bloom advised there was a party which was attended by a party crew, two people were shot and killed. This hasn't been a trend it's the first homicide in Sierra Lakes and it's only the city's 5th for the year. The detectives are working very hard interviewing and polygraph involved parties and witnesses. They made a call to the owner of the house because the people living in the house were renters and the owner advised the renters have left and will not be living in the house any more.***
- Asked when the suspect description is available will it be in the news paper. ***Lt. Bloom advised yes it will be in the newspaper.***
- Asked why it took so long to process the crime scene. ***Lt. Bloom advised the detectives like to take their time to make sure they get every little bit of evidence. When a crime like this occurs there is a lot to do, it can take anywhere from 12 to 24 hours to fully complete the investigation at the crime scene.***
- Asked if there is a way to see if a house is a group home or not. ***Lt. Bloom advised to call him with the information and he'll check into it.***
- Advised there were three incidents which occurred on her street in one day, a car was stolen and two trucks were broken into. Advised it's too much. ***Lt. Bloom advised if you have a problem such as that give him a call or email him for extra patrol.***
- At the park during football practice the parents are blocking driveways with their vehicles. ***Lt. Bloom advised if that happens to call the police department and we'll send an officer out as soon as we can.***
- Asked who allowed the Pop Warner Football League to use the park. The parents are rude and a lot of the problems are coming from the park. ***Lt. Bloom advised the city allowed the league to use the park. Advised he will put correspondence out to Beat 1 officers to get out of the vehicle and walk the park.***
- Asked if the school can be blocked off because they hang out back in the school. ***Lt. Bloom advised something can be done but it is private property but will talk with the school police to figure out a solution to the problem with the school.***

- Suggested maybe the restrooms at the park could be closed at dusk or the lights can be adjusted at a certain time. *Captain Hostetter advised we try to get to the root of the problem and any suggestion any one has would greatly help.*
- Advised he heard there was also dog fighting happening in the park.
- Advised one of the basketball courts fell down due to the wind and kids were playing on top of it.
- Asked if skateboards can be made illegal. *Lt. Bloom advised they are not suppose to be riding skateboards in the park if you see that please call the police department.*
- Asked if there was a curfew for parties. *Lt. Bloom advised there is no set time however if it's disruptive to you please call the police department no matter what time and we'll send an officer out.*
- Asked if an alarm goes off two or three times and it's false do we charge for the officers cost. *Captain Hostetter advised yes we do charge however we only get about \$30,000 to \$35,000 and we are not breaking even. Our officers are still responding to 30% to 40% of all alarm calls since October 1, 2007.*
- Asked what is going to stop an alarm company from saying the alarm is a verified alarm when it's not. *Captain Hostetter advised we have sent out letters to the companies and told them if the alarms are found to false with not verifying it and they are telling us that it is verified then we will send the case to the District Attorney for them to decide to file charges.*
- Asked if the police department is taking into consideration any vehicle burglaries when the dispatcher checks the previous events for suspicious activity. *Captain Hostetter advised the policy says to take all calls into consideration, the dispatcher is not running the whole area but merely that address.*
- Asked what is the difference between residential burglaries and vehicle burglaries when we arrest a suspect. *Captain Hostetter advised we can arrest them for a felony on either but it's up to the District Attorney to lower the charge to a misdemeanor.*
- Asked if the police department keeps records of how many houses have alarms compared to how many houses don't have alarms and is it helpful to have the little signs out that say you have alarms. *Captain Hostetter advised we do not keep records like that however a very small number of houses with alarms are burglarized. Any little thing that advertises that you have an alarm is great because the burglar will see that and will probably pass up your house.*
- Asked if the police department has citizen patrol. *Captain Hostetter advised yes we do have an active volunteer group who does citizen patrol amongst other duties within the department. If you are interested in being a police volunteer call (909) 350-7758.*
- Asked pertaining to the fires how are we suppose to get prepared, what is the most important things we should get ready if we are to be evacuated. *Captain Hostetter advised we live in an area where there is a whole lot of issues such as fires and earthquakes, it's pretty rare that the police have to evacuate an area. The best thing for you to do is to take our CERT Class which explains emergency situations. Also another good thing you can do is go on the internet and research it there are a lot of helpful websites out there.*

- Asked who owns the land just north of the soccer field because it's just a mess. *Dr. Steadry (Fontana Unified School District) advised the school district recently purchased that land.*
- Asked if there are going to be any more middle schools in the area. *Dr. Steadry advised there will be two more middle schools in the area.*
- Asked if there was a projected year for those schools. *Dr. Steadry advised both schools are still several years out.*
- Asked how overly impacted is Sierra Lakes Elementary School. *Dr. Steadry advised Sierra Lakes Elementary School is full, but some students will be going to Binks Elementary School when that opens which should alleviate some of the over crowding of the school.*

THE NEXT MEETING DATE IS JANUARY 14, 2008. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT SIERRA LAKES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (5740 Avenal Place) AT 7:00 PM.

PLEASE SUBMIT ANY ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA BY JANUARY 13, 2008 TO:

AMBER SMITH
FONTANA POLICE DEPARTMENT
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THE CITY OF FONTANA COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD, KFON CHANNEL 3, GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL ANNOUNCES THE SIERRA LAKES/CITRUS HEIGHTS COMMUNITY MEETINGS' DATE, TIME, AND PLACE DAILY.