
Midtown, 4/01/2009

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APD ALERTS

From Lt. Padgett of APD: *Sgt. Brent Schierbaum is the supervisor over the burglary unit assigned to Zone 5. His unit is among the best on identifying trends and developing suspects involved in burglaries. His arrest and clear up rate is second to none. He has developed the following information on a burglary crew that is active in our area. Please pass this information on the community so they will be aware of what to look for. Anyone seeing suspects meeting these descriptions loading items into a vehicle should call 911 immediately.*

Please have the community concentrate on the suspects rather than the vehicles. It is believed that many of the vehicles are stolen prior to committing the burglaries. Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (404) 422-6063.

As you are aware residential burglaries occurring at apartment complexes is the prevailing burglary trend at this time in Zone 5. While all are not connected - a significant number of them are being committed by a group of three black males, age 16-25, wearing casual baggy clothing. One suspect that stands out in each of the video clips (or witness reports) is a black male, approximately 6 feet tall, with long dread locks.

Vehicles used in some of these incidents include:

- *White, 1980's Chevy Monte Carlo (drive out-dealers tag)*
- *Red, 4-door sedan - possibly a Ford Taurus (unknown tag)*
- *White 1990's Chevy Caprice (unknown tag)*
- *Grey or light colored Mercury Grand Marquis (unknown tag)*

The burglaries committed by this group since February have been at eight (8) separate apartment complexes, occurring Monday - Friday, and between the hours of 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM, with most occurring late morning or early afternoon.

In addition to daily directed patrols at the various complexes, the Zone 5 Burglary Unit is currently meeting with management and maintenance staff at each of the affected apartment complexes. We are educating them on the current trend, informing them of what activity to look for, and instructing them to call 9-1-1 as soon as such activity is viewed. This action is being taken as all burglaries have occurred while leasing and maintenance staff are on duty in each of the complexes. As the Zone 5 Burglary Unit can only monitor up to four complexes a day - we desperately need the cooperation of the various apartment complex staffs in apprehending this burglary crew.

We will also be expanding our efforts to other apartment complexes not yet victimized by this burglary crew. Additionally, we are identifying the Courtesy Officers living in each of the complexes and will be e-mailing them the most recent information we have on the burglary crew and encouraging their cooperation and participation in the effort.

BEVERAGE BOOTH

Last week we put out a request for volunteers for the beverage booth during the Dogwood Festival. The proceeds from this operation could result in 133 hours of patrolling for the safety of your neighborhood. We still need to cover the following slots:

Friday, April 17th - Operating hours: Noon - 9:30pm

- 3:00 - 6:15pm - 2 slots open

Saturday, April 18th - Operating hours: 10:00am - 9:30pm

- Set up: 8:30 - 1 slot open
- 9:45am - 1:00pm - 1 slot open
- 4:00 - 7:00pm - 2 slots open
- 7:00 - 9:45pm - 4 slots open

Sunday, April 19th - Operating hours: Noon - 9:30pm

- 11:45am - 3:00pm - 1 slot open
- 3:00 - 6:15pm - 2 slots open
- 6:15 - 9:45pm - 4 slots open

PATROL RIDE-ALONGS

Members interested in taking a closer look at the issues we deal with are welcome to go on a ride-along with Sgt. Cooper when he is patrolling our neighborhood. He generally works Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays during the day, and on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Please contact us at info@midtownponce.org to make arrangements. Sgt. Cooper generally does not permit ride-alongs with the other officers working for us.

PROBLEM PROPERTIES

The Public Works Department asked us to submit a list of 5 properties causing problems in the neighborhood.

New to our list is the house at 7th and Penn. The house was practically sliced in half during a 2008 thunderstorm, and reconstruction work stopped over a month ago. The unsecurely dangling large pieces of plywood covering two windows over the 7th Street sidewalk could fall and seriously injure a pedestrian at any moment. Vagrant bedding can be seen under the deck behind the house, and neighbors have seen street people climbing up a ladder onto the deck during the wee hours of the night. A red car with smashed-out windows rounds off the property

Others on our list are:

- 292 9th Street
- The Jaguar Club building on West Peachtree
- The Kodak Building at Ponce & Argonne

Let us know if there are more to add.

PACKAGE THEFTS

Parcel thefts have been a major problem in Midtown for quite some time. We have spoken to one of the large carriers and plan to talk to one or two others. The carriers are extremely concerned about lost/stolen packages because they generate high claim costs and bad PR. They closely track their delivery personnel and their delivery activity using their own industry software and GPS equipment. They also track their claims by zip code and take extra measures when upticks occur. They train delivery personnel to watch for thieves following them.

After our initial call, the security department analyzed claims in zip codes 30308 and 30309, and reported that special measures taken led to a 50% drop in claims during a one month period.

Urban living poses certain challenges, and innovative solutions are needed to provide convenient and secure methods of delivery. The best strategy is probably to have packages delivered to work or use mailbox services. We suggested that they look into the **Packstation concept** rapidly gaining popularity in Germany - a system where, when the recipient is not at home, the delivery service leaves a bar-coded delivery notice to be scanned at an automated bank of secure lockers conveniently located in the neighborhood. One company responded that the cost would be too high.

Intown Hardware in Virginia Highland offers to let people pick up parcels there. We are not sure how sustainable this will be, and package services do not seem willing to incur what they perceive to be an extra liability.

Sooner or later, one of the package services will pick up on a concept for secure, convenient package delivery at no extra cost. Intown living is for Americans a novelty, and certain bugs will be have to be worked out. But until then, we advise to have packages sent to work, friends, or mailbox services.

LETTERS TO THE MAYOR

A Piedmont Avenue resident - Hello Mayor Franklin: Straight and to the point...I cannot suggest what should be done to compensate the budget and reinstate increased police protection, as that task is, respectfully, not my job, nor concern. I have lived on Piedmont Avenue in Midtown for 18 years and I've never seen it so bad in terms of vagrants and thieves running loose, taking bikes, stealing light fixtures (for the metal), accosting people in broad daylight on the streets and in Piedmont Park (I was cursed out 3 weeks ago for not giving to a homeless man who would not leave me alone), inordinate amount of carjacking, violent muggings / murders, prostitutes and she-males throwing rocks, and...sigh...you get the point. For [what] I pay in property taxes since your 51% tax increase instituted a few years ago, it all doesn't add up. Please do something...do it quickly...we are suffering.

MAYOR'S RESPONSE: Thanks for writing. Let's start with crime. Our crime rate is too high though it is lower now than in many years. That doesn't mean you aren't experiencing more than you've witnessed before. It also doesn't mean that I don't support more investment in public safety. I do and am working hard to convince the Council to appropriate funding in the FY 2010 budget. Last year they like a lot of folks thought Atlanta wouldn't be hit by the national recession or that the recession wouldn't be so bad. Though public safety represents 70% of the total number of General Fund personnel (not including departments aviation and watershed) we need additional investment. Atlanta should have had 2000 officers 15 to 20 years ago and like the sewers it has been left to this generation of elected officials to make the investment. The furloughs make matters worse (though crime rate is down since January) in terms of police

coverage (down 10%). At 1700 officers we have almost reached the 2000 goal and we have more police coverage than ever. The city's percentage of your local tax bill was 27% when I came into office it is now 23% of the bill. The millage rate was raised 50% in 2002 to 9 plus mills and is now 7.12 mills. So in spite of raising the millage the city has been rolling it back and frankly that's one of the factors causing financial problems now. Atlanta is a moderate size city with the responsibility for big city operations. Over 400,000 people come into the city everyday to work, operate their businesses and go to school. The city provides a cross section of municipal services to nearly 1 million people each day. Most American cities get state revenue to offset the cost of operating the economic centers of the state. GA does not make such investments in cities ranking it 49th for support of cities. As we move forward in developing the city budget your comments are helpful to understanding the day to day experiences of the people who live here and pay the taxes.

A Myrtle Street resident - I have recently been inspired to request that you end the fire and police furloughs immediately. Last week, I watched (and called 911) as a car wreck involving 2 cars held up traffic and made it very unsafe for pedestrians on 10th St. (near Myrtle) for over 1 hour. After watching the cars sit and the drivers call for 30 minutes, I called 911 myself to ensure that APD had been called. It was close to the afternoon rush hour, when drivers are impatient and speeding down 10th. It was not a small accident, and I certainly hope no one was hurt.

BE SAFE AND STAY VIGILANT! And remember, your car + your valuables = loot for a thief!

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance

A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY SPONSORS WHO PROVIDE A MAJOR ENHANCEMENT TO YOUR PATROL'S EFFECTIVENESS:

Midtown Neighbors Association

The Sembler Company | Post Parkside

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AND THE MANY RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS MEMBERS OF THE MPSA