C R I M E   A L E R T

The Town of Ocean Ridge Police Department is currently and actively investigating a series of vehicle burglaries as well as the theft of a motor vehicle from within our community over this past weekend. Although these crimes may be linked, they took place in different areas of the town which means they were not targeted crimes.

These crimes are considered crimes of opportunity because the vehicles were left unlocked and in some cases, valuables, garage door remotes and even the vehicle keys were left inside the unlocked vehicles. Please help us help you by keeping your vehicles secured and your valuables out of sight. In most cases, these crimes take place in less than one (1) minute as to not draw attention from law enforcement or even the general public.

Please see the crime prevention bulletin below which was published in August for more information regarding this topic.

"IF YOU LEAVE IT, LOCK IT"

Over the last year, the entire State of Florida has seen an increase in vehicle thefts. This increase is larger than ever before with an approximate increase of 12.4 percent. Although the majority of other thefts have decreased in Florida during this time frame, the theft of motor vehicles has been and will continue to be on the rise in Florida.

This is no surprise to me since I have been monitoring this type of criminal increase on a daily basis over the last two years. Many of you are aware of this because our agency has attended a variety of local homeowner's association meetings within our area and have sent out various email blasts regarding these types of crimes in an effort to educate and ultimately protect you.

Although we have seen an increase in these types of crimes within Ocean Ridge, our statistical numbers are much lower than many other communities within Palm Beach County. Even though are numbers are lower than the average, some of our residents have still fallen victim to these types of crimes.

As a result of these increases, the Palm Beach County Police Chiefs Association in conjunction with the Ocean Ridge Police Department and many other agencies within our area have agreed that an educational component is necessary to reduce and eliminate these types of crimes from continuing within our communities.

The reason that this educational component is so important is because the large majority of these thefts result when vehicles are left unattended, unlocked and with an ignition key left inside, many time in plain sight or even in the ignition.

In addition to the vehicle being unattended, unlocked and having keys present inside them, many of these thefts have also resulted when valuables were left inside the vehicle in plain view.

With all these factors being known, the best way to reduce these crimes is by preventing it from happening in the first place. So the campaign of, *"IF YOU LEAVE IT, LOCK IT"* is simply that. When you leave your vehicle unattended, lock it. In addition to that, please do not keep or leave any vehicle keys or other valuables inside your vehicle when it is parked or otherwise unattended. Keys and Valuables are enticing to the criminal element and believe it or not, but it takes less that (1) minute for these crimes to occur.

As discussed in previous crime prevention tips, opportunity is what a criminal thrives on. If we take away the opportunity, they will be powerless.