

## **Seminole County law enforcement teams up to combat vehicle burglaries - 10/21/2012**

SEMINOLE CO. (Oct. 21) - Law enforcement agencies in Seminole County today announced the launch of an intensive education and awareness campaign designed to prevent local motorists from becoming victims of vehicle burglary. Beginning tomorrow and continuing through the end of the year, local law enforcement agencies will conduct a series of coordinated safety checks, leaving assessment cards and courtesy notices on thousands of vehicles in typical burglary hotspot areas across the county. The notices are designed to encourage drivers to lock their cars and avoid leaving valuables on display. The campaign is expected to reach more than 10,000 motorists.

Crime statistics show 1,402 vehicle burglaries were committed in Seminole County during the first nine months of this year, a 3 percent increase over the same time last year. Vehicle burglaries are crimes of opportunity and take only seconds to commit. Thieves enter through unlocked doors or open windows, or smash out windows to grab items left on seats. Thieves who steal credit cards, debit cards or checks typically try to make a transaction right away, and will likely make multiple transactions until funds are blocked. Other items stolen such as phones, laptops, GPS devices, and electronics, are kept for personal use, pawned, or resold to others.

Over the next 10 weeks, Seminole County law enforcement agencies will conduct safety checks of vehicles parked at locations such as gyms, schools/day cares, parks, and shopping centers. The total number of safety checks conducted, and the percent of vehicles that are "low risk" vs. "high risk" targets, will be continually updated at [www.seminolesheriff.org/VehicleSafety](http://www.seminolesheriff.org/VehicleSafety). Vehicles that are "high risk" are those unlocked, have a window open, have valuables in plain view, or have keys left in the vehicle.

The campaign is timed to coordinate with the holiday season and is in addition to a variety of investigative and enforcement efforts also underway. The initiative is a joint crime prevention effort between the Seminole County Sheriff's Office and the Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Lake Mary, Longwood, Oviedo, Sanford, Winter Springs, and University of Central Florida police departments.