EFFINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Effingham Police Department Addresses Rise in Thefts from Vehicles and Businesses; Urges Community Awareness and Networking with Neighbors

Effingham Police Department is alerting residents to a recent increase in reported thefts and vehicle burglaries across our community, particularly on the south side of the city. Officers have responded to multiple reports over the past few weeks involving both locked and unlocked vehicles, valuables left in plain sight, and items stolen from commercial properties.

Many of the burglaries from motor vehicles have taken place in business lots where vehicles are full of various tools and equipment; many of those vehicles were physically broken into and valuable tools stolen. Other businesses have experienced thefts of inventory - anything which can be easily sold for scrap or pawned.

While investigators are actively following leads, police say community awareness is a key defense against these crimes.

"Most of these thefts are crimes of opportunity," said Investigations Lieutenant Aaron Lange. "When neighbors stay alert, look out for one another, and report suspicious behavior right away, it makes a significant difference in preventing crime. Together, we can reduce these incidents."

The department encourages residents to:

- Lock vehicles and homes at all times, even when parked in driveways.
- Remove valuables from cars or store them out of sight.
- Store bicycles out of sight or in locked outbuildings.
- Install exterior motion lighting and consider security cameras.
- Join or form a group with your neighborhood, creating a stronger network of communication and deterrence.
- Report suspicious activity immediately by calling Effingham Police Department's non-emergency number 217-347-0774 or 911 in emergencies.

Effingham Police Department is committed to working closely with the community to address these crimes. Increased patrols have been deployed in affected neighborhoods, and officers are available to help residents set up or strengthen local neighborhood groups.

"A connected community is a safe community," added Kurt Davis, Police Chief. "By staying alert and working together, we can stop these crimes before they happen. If you see something concerning, don't ignore it—say something. Whether it's unusual behavior, unattended items, or suspicious activity, community awareness and quick reporting can help prevent crime and protect lives and property. As an example, many of the suspected groups are wearing hoods as well as face coverings in this heat; that is suspicious activity and we encourage you to call us immediately. If you see anything suspicious, please call us immediately."

Additional information will be shared as it becomes available, but no further details are being released at this point to avoid compromising the investigation.

For more information on starting a neighborhood community group or receiving crime prevention tips, please visit https://www.effinghamil.com/departments/police/ or contact us at EPD@EffinghamIL.com.

If you see it, say it! The Effingham Police Department encourages you to call the Police Department immediately at 217-347-0774 to report suspicious activity in your neighborhood or business district. Information can be given anonymously by calling the CRIME STOPPERS Tip Line at 217-347-6583. Anonymous callers can receive up to $1,000 cash rewards.