Metal Theft, It's a Steal Puyallup Police Department Problem Oriented Policing Unit



Metal Theft The problem, the solution



The Problem



- Not a local issue, nationwide issue
- Numerous constructions sites being burglarized
- Both commercial and residential
- Costly crimes
- Very few if any witnesses
- Difficult to deploy resources to surveil

Commercial Burglaries





- Brand new spools of wire stolen
- Installed wiring ripped from walls
- Copper tubing taken (both installed and uninstalled)
- Installed tubing and wiring constitute the biggest loss; they must have it reinstalled in addition to repurchasing the materials

Commercial Thefts

Baseball field lighting

- Installed wiring taken from light poles
- Installed wiring taken from underground conduit
- Again, the biggest cost for this is labor

Street Lights
 -installed wiring stolen



Commercial Thefts

Air conditioning units

- Theft of coil units containing copper and aluminum
- Large dollar amount of theft due to complete replacing of unit necessary
- Several took place during daylight hours
- One business had four units destroyed: Price to fix \$75,000.00
- No witnesses to these crimes



Residential Burglaries

- Most of the time installed products taken
- Both wiring and copper tubing stolen, both installed and new supplies
- Few or no witnesses or evidence to these crimes

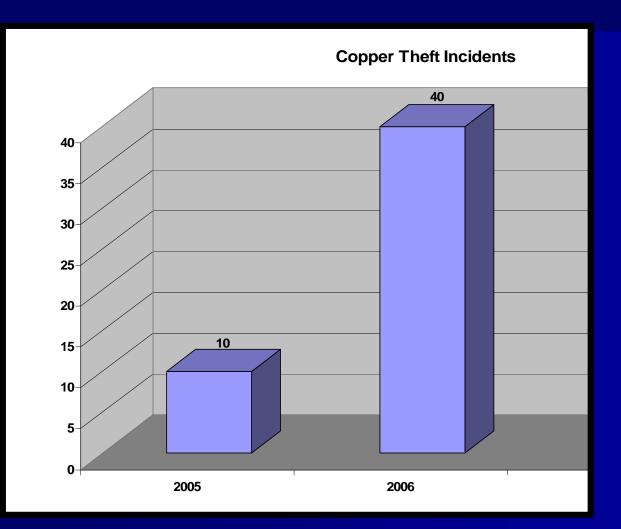


Analysis

- Why an upsurge in our state, county and city of these metal thefts?
- What was the reason behind these crimes?
- Where were the stolen items going?
- What could we do to curb the thefts?
- How could we empower our "victims" to help us help them?
- New laws needed for recyclers?

Statistics – Metal thefts

January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2006



Reason for Increase





 The rapid increase in the amount of metal thefts is attributed to a high demand for non ferrous metals overseas, especially copper.

Reason

- Decrease in methamphetamine labs attributed to a new law passed two years ago
- New requirement for stores to keep all pseudoephedrine products behind counters
- Requiring people who want to purchase these cold pills to produce valid ID and sign a log.



Reason

Users needed to buy the methamphetamine and needed cash.

 Metal theft was easier than burglary due to lack of security and the large of amount of target product available.



Worked with local agencies to develop a "do not buy list" for recyclers

- Surveillance of likely targets
- Contact local county recyclers to explain the root problem and see what type of records were being kept
- Determine what we could do to help contractors deter criminal activity
- Mesa, Arizona intervention

Mesa, AZ Construction Theft Program

- Sgt. Bellmer requested help from our department Crime Analyst Lorri Ericson
- Through the IALEP (International Association of Law Enforcement Planners), Ericson made a request for information and learned of Mesa's program
- Due to high construction thefts, Mesa began having companies spray paint their property at jobsites
- Mesa's program had a 100% reduction in thefts almost IMMEDIATELY

Audience – anyone else tried to have sites mark metals?



Response (continued)

- We determined that the pawnshop laws could apply to recyclers - but it needed help
- Contacted local state representative Dawn Morrell in summer of 2006 – shared concerns of recent metal thefts
- Bill was drafted and introduced to combat the epidemic of metal theft January 2007
- Chief James and Sgt. Bellmer testified in a House hearing in Washington State and new law was passed in May 2007

Elements of the new law

Revised Code of Washington - Title 19

Recyclers shall keep records for 1 year, including
 Name, address, phone number, signature, and ID number of seller.

- Date, time, location, and value of goods
- Description of products sold and buyer's name
- License number and description of vehicle
- Signed declaration that the products are not stolen



Elements of the new law RCW Title 19

NO cash transactions over 30 dollars

- Check is mailed to street address not less than ten days later
- Also a crime if recycler makes multiple transactions to keep values under \$30



Elements of the new law RCW Title 19

Recyclers cannot accept:

- Beer kegs unless from brewery or manufacturer
- Burned wire without proof of proper burning
- Commercial property without proof of ownership
- Law enforcement is allowed access to records at any time

Audience: has anyone tried to pass similar legislation?



- Worked with all jurisdictions in Pierce County to have a color that their contractors would paint their wire and copper
- Developed an informational flier to be handed out with all City of Puyallup building permits outlining theft deterrent practices



The Puyallup Police Department is concerned about CONSTRUCTION THEFT

Copper, aluminum, brass, and other metals are stolen for their recycling value. Copper wire and pipe, brass fittings, and aluminum ladders are stolen by thieves to sell as scrap. Pipe and wire products are even stolen after being installed.

- · New appliances, often stored in garage areas, are stolen while still in their boxes
- Cabinets, windows, and doors stored in garages or rooms at construction sites are taken before they are installed. They are more easily taken when left outside.
- All types of lumber, especially plywood and treated wood, are hauled away in trucks by thieves.
- Air conditioning units have been known to be marked by thieves with the word "scrap" and dismantied to obtain the copper coils and cooling cores. If questioned by anyone as to their activity, they point to the marking and confirm that the equipment is to be scrapped. Thieves also use the anhydrous ammonia inside the unit for the manufacture of methamphetamine.
- Construction tools have always been a popular target for construction theft. Large tool boxes weighing as much as 500 pounds have been taken from sites in our city. Storage containers are also burglarized for tools and metals. Items taken include wall jacks, ladders, bologna cords, spider boxes, generators, and compressors.

You CAN prevent construction thefts:

- Call the Puyallup Police Problem Oriented Policing Unit at 253-770-3354 if you
 recognize your construction site as a potential target for criminals (valuable items
 have been delivered to your jobsite). The Police Department wants to work with
 you to reduce your chances of becoming a victim.
- Take reasonable steps to secure tools and building materials. Try and plan installations to less material is available to be readily stolen.
- Document serial numbers and permanently mark your construction tools to deter theft and increase chances of recovery.
- · Always report all construction thefts and suspicious activities to the police.
- Consider providing or hiring your own security personnel to protect your investment. Jobsite security systems are also currently available from some companies.

- Developed a sign to deter criminal activity that stated "All copper and wire on this construction site is marked and we will prosecute all thefts."
- These signs were laminated and given to construction sites
- Trespass notices posted and enforced by police



Puyallup Police Department Construction Site Survey			
Constru	ction company:		
	ours contacts:		
		(name, position, phone)	
		(name, position, phone)	
		(name, position, phone)	
Are there	materials on the si	te that are attractive to thieves?	
	Copper pipe or fittir	ngs	
	Wire, other electrical parts		
	Air conditioners, other appliances		
_	Tools, ladders		
	Welders, generator	S	
	measures being tak		
	Adequate construction fencing with locking gates		
	Locking containers (for tools/materials)		
	Alarm system		
_	Video surveillance		
	Lighting		
	On-premise securit		
	Building is secured (has operable doors/windows)		
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	Portable hauling eq		
Co	mments/concerns:		

criminals (valuable items have been delivered to your jobsite). The Police Department wants to work with you to reduce your chances of becoming a victim. Experience has shown recently that once a jobsite has been burglarized, it is more likely the suspect(s) will return! POP unit conducted construction site surveys in the middle of the night looking for opportunity to steal items

The POP unit then followed up with all superintendents of job sites that items could have been easily stolen

Audit

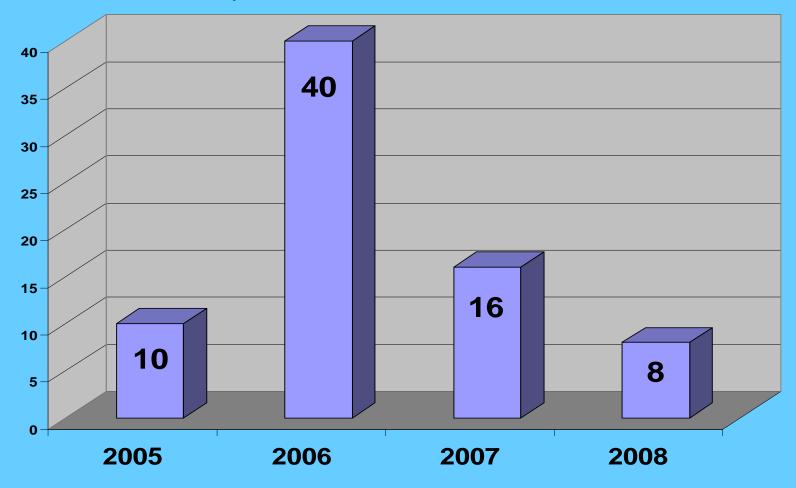


- In the most recent construction site surveys, no items of opportunity were found
- Some sites have hired private security during the copper tubing/wiring installation phase of construction
- Some sites have painted their copper/wiring
- Sites are burying their temporary power
- Sites are using alarms such as "Tattletale"
- All sites are using our signage (trespass sign also)

Results

Copper Theft Incidents

(2008 data through September 1, 2008)

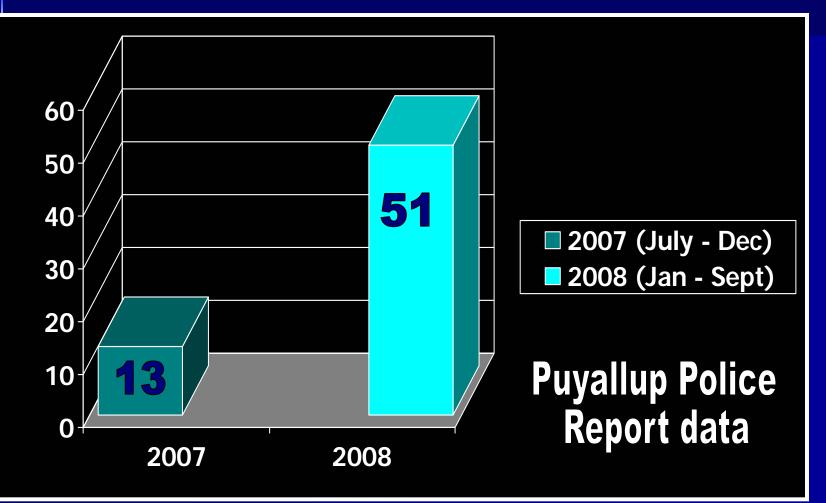


New trend: Catalytic Converter Thefts

 Another target for metal thieves



Catalytic Converter Thefts



Prevention StrategiesSecurity?Legislation?

Identification?

Ford working to prevent catalytic converter theft

Posted Aug 2nd 2008 3:23PM by <u>Jeremy Korzeniewski</u> Filed under: <u>Government/Legal, Green, Ford, UK</u>



There's a container of precious metals dangling from the bottom of your car: your <u>catalytic converter</u>. They contain platinum, and its rising cost has caused a recent spike in converter theft, especially in the U.K. Not only does a missing cat let more pollution into the air, it also disables constain of the car in some cases. In an effort to combat this

Anti-theft devices?



How does it work? The CATCLAMPTM essentially creates a cage around the catalytic converter. Two alloy collars lock at both ends of the converter. Special aircraft cable then runs between the collars making a cage around the converter. That same aircraft cable then locks the whole unit to the vehicle



Contact Information

Sgt. Pete Bellmer Puyallup Police Department 253-841-5415







Scrap Metal Video

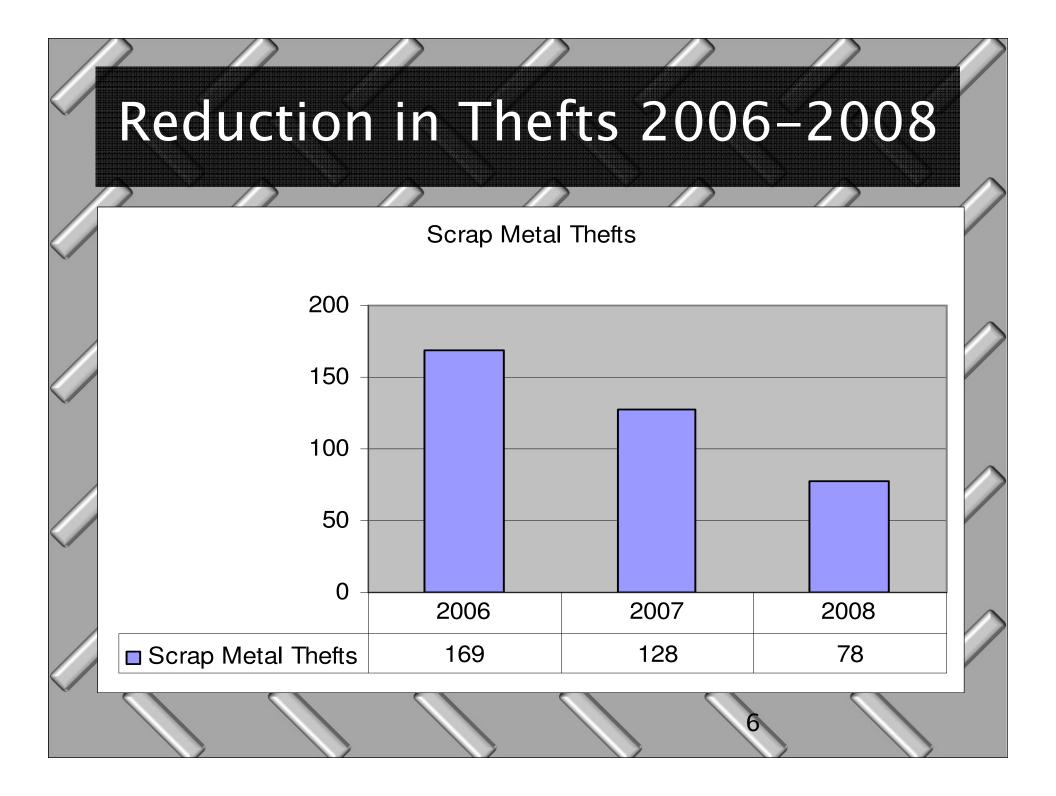
- Accident puts city light pole on the side of the road
- Thief ties pole to top of his vehicle
- Tries to sell to Scrap Metal Dealer
- While police are arresting him
- Another thief arrives with a truck full of city manhole covers

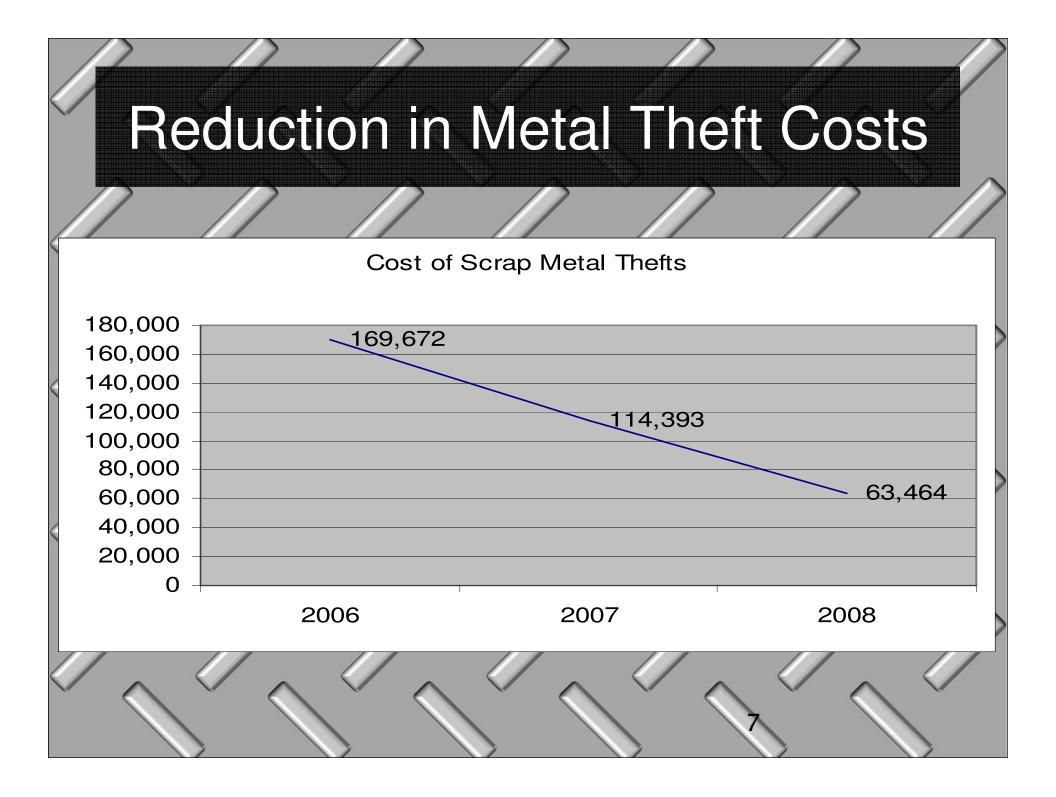
Lincoln's Response to Scrap Metal Thefts

- 2006 increase in thefts
 - work with scrap metal dealers
 - create ordinance for sellers
- 2007
 - city ordinance permits go into effect
 - POP Projects
- 2008
 - POP Projects
 - state law for dealers, city law for sellers

What Worked?

 2006 City Ordinance Required permits Enforcement POP projects 2008 State Law Finding the loopholes Adjusting to changing environment Public Awareness





The Chief's Corner

Monday, July 21, 2008 Metal theft update II

About this time last year, I gave <u>an update</u> on The Chief's Corner regarding thefts of brass, aluminum and metal. The update was a comparison between the first six months of 2006, and the first six months of 2007. The data seemed to show that strategies initiated in late 2006 had worked.

Recently, we've had a few metal thefts that have caught my eye, and I was wondering what the situation is in 2008. Had the thefts rebounded, or did it just seem that way? I ran the data for the first half of 2008, and here's how the past three years line up:

Jan. 1 to June 30	Number of cases	Dollar loss + damage
2006	70	\$112,812
2007	57	\$58,508
2008	60	\$52,931

Looks like the reduction is holding. It could be that the State legislature's action last session in passing <u>LB 766</u> will help keep this crime tamped down. The new laws passed in the 2008 session all became effective <u>last Friday</u>, unless they carried the emergency clause. We'll have to keep an eye on metal thefts for the remainder of the year, and see what happens.

Posted by Tom Casady at 3:15 AM

The Chief's Corner

Tuesday, July 10, 2007 Metal theft update

Thefts of metal such as brass, copper, and aluminum have been an <u>international crime problem</u> for several years, as the value of these metals has risen. Theives will do thousands of dollars worth of damage to a commercial air conditioning unit or a cell phone base station just to make a few bucks on the scrap value.

Last year, a group of officers worked on a plan to try to reduce these thefts. Among the highlights, a new city ordinance restricting who can sell these metals, and requiring better identification of the seller. That law went into effect on December 1, 2006. Here's the comparison between the first six months of 2006 and 2007:

2006: 70 incidents, \$112,812 loss and damage 2007: 57 incidents, \$58,508 loss and damage

That's a nice decrease--close to 20% fewer cases, and 50% less loss and damage. Among the most aggravating cases last year was a number of new homes under construction that were stripped of their copper plumbing. The thieves even took the brand new brass water meters. You'd think that would have been a little suspicious when the local metal recycler bought those. Here's the data on the metal thefts at construction sites for the first six months:

2006: 38 incidents, \$25,177 loss and damage 2007: 9 incidents, \$14,646 loss and damage

While the ordinance has helped, I think <u>public awareness</u> has, too. We've had some nice cases where citizens have called in on suspicious persons around construction site. Our officers are more aware, too, and are watching construction areas closely on patrol. Some good on-view arrests have helped. In 2006, the Big Thomspson and Village Gardens subdivisions in southeast Lincoln were hard hit. The area is still developing, with lots of home construction this year, but the thefts and burglaries have stopped. The map below depicts the 2006 metal thefts in that neighborhood (the houses) and the 2007 prowler/suspicious person reports (the circles). One is related to the other!



As the construction site thefts have declined, though, a new kind of metal theft has emerged. So far this year, we have had 9 reports of thefts from <u>communications tower sites</u>, with a loss and damage of \$15,025 (that's included in the totals above). Theives have gone after copper wire and copper grounding plates. Several more have been investigated by the Lancaster County Sheriff outside the city limits of Lincoln. Criminals are adaptable, and their *modus operandi* will change to take advantage of opporunties that present themselves. If you live near a radio or cell tower, we would appreciate your watchfulness and calls if you see anything suspicious.

Posted by Tom Casady at 5:43 AM

Creating the Local Ordinance

- Meeting with businesses to craft the ordinance
- Compromise-permit for seller
- Businesses supported new ordinance at city council hearings

City Ordinance

5.41.210 Report; Salvage Operation and Recycling Processing Center.

(a) It shall be the duty of every salvage operation and recycling processing center to keep an individual report of every transaction of high value salvage material. The reports shall be organized by the date of transaction and shall be maintained and kept on the premises. The reports shall be open at all times during business hours to the inspection of any law enforcement officer upon request by the officer. Reports shall be kept in a form provided by the Lincoln Police Department or in a form as approved by the Lincoln Police Department.

(b) Such report shall show clearly, legibly, and in English the following information:

The date and hour of the day when each article was received;

(2) The name and signature of the individual who handled the transaction on behalf of the salvage operation;

- The signature of the customer(s);
- (4) The amount paid to the customer(s), if any;
- (5) The complete description of weight and grade of each material received;

(6) The name, address and birthday of the customer(s), verified by any operator's license or identification card issued by any state or by the United States;

(7) The type and issuing number of the identification used in subsection (6) above;

(8) In lieu of the identification requirements of (6) and (7) above, the report may show the issuing number of the person's high value salvage collector permit that has been issued by the City of Lincoln, Nebraska. (Ord. 18831 §15; October 23, 2006).

No Sale to a Thief

 5.41.240 Unlawful Sale to Salvage Operation by Person Convicted of Theft

It shall be unlawful for any individual who has been convicted of any theft offense within the last five years under the provisions of the Nebraska Revised Statutes or the Lincoln Municipal code to donate, give, sale, trade, or pawn any high value salvage material to a salvage operation, recycling processing center or high value salvage collector permitted under this chapter within the City of Lincoln.

Sellers Permit

Application \$5.00
Background check
No theft conviction 5 yrs
Photo & Fingerprints
Valid for 1 year

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ace:Sex:Height:	Weight:	Eye Color:Hai	r Color:		
lotor vehicles used by applicant d	uring collection:				
ear:Make:	Model: Color:	License Number:	State:		
ear: Make:	Model: Color:	License Number:	State:		
ave you ever been arrested or issu	ed a citation for any of the follow	ring? Yes	No		
 Burglary 	 Theft by Extortion 	 Taking pos 	session of property		
 Theft by unlawful taking 	 Theft of property lost, m 	uslaid, or without com	nsent of owner		
 Theft by shop lifting 	delivered by mistake	 Larceny 			
 Theft of rented or leased 	 Theft of services 	 Shoplifting 			
motor vehicle	 Theft by receiving stoler 	n property • Theft of ser	rvices		
 Theft by deception 	 Receiving stolen proper 	ty.			

If so, explain the circumstances, date(s) and what law enforcement agency was involved?

(reverse side may be used)

*Applicant is required to notify LPD within 10 business days of any changes to the above asterisk information. Applicant may reapply for a permit after June 1st of each year.

Applicant Name (Printed)

Applicants Signature

Form 111506

Approved Denied

(LPD Employee)

(Processing Date)

Date

NOTE: Any issued permit expires on July 31st of <u>EVERY</u> year. LPD Crime Analysis Unit, 575 S. 10th Street, Lincoln NE 68508 441-7207

City Sellers Permit

- Laminated ID Card
 Permit # is the ID # for the person in our computer system
 Photo is in our music
- Photo is in our mug shot system



71157 Issued: 08-15-2008 Expires: 07-31-2009 (Renewable 60 days prior to expiration)

LINCOLN, NE 68503

Permit#:

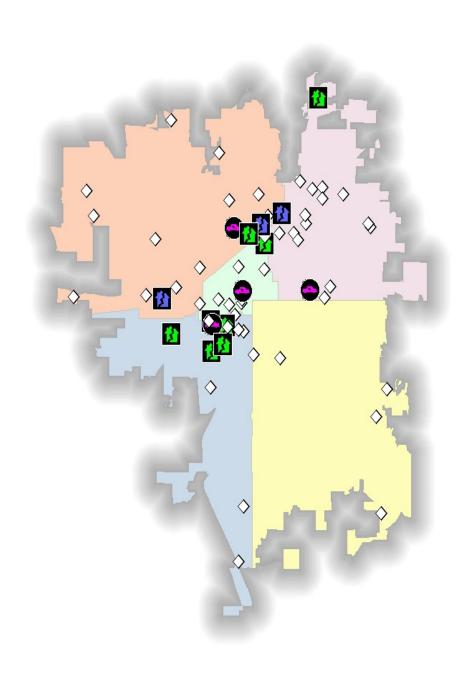
How GIS Mapping Helps us Solve Crime

Analysis POP Projects Community Awareness

Reports Available

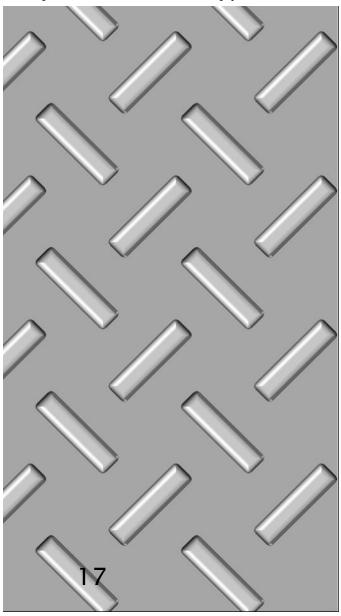
- Analytic reports
- Individual Reports
- Trends
- List of all scrap metal thefts
- Imbedded links to on-line case files

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City of Lincoln Nebraska 2008 Scrap Metal Theft

by Location and Type

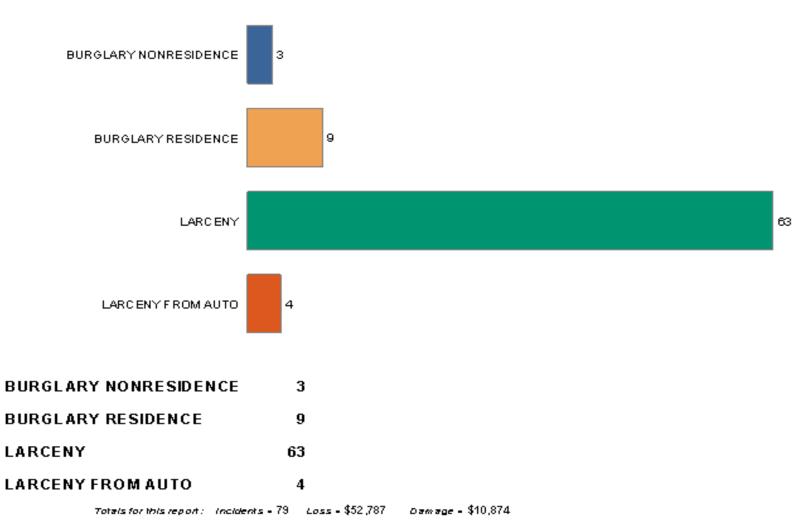


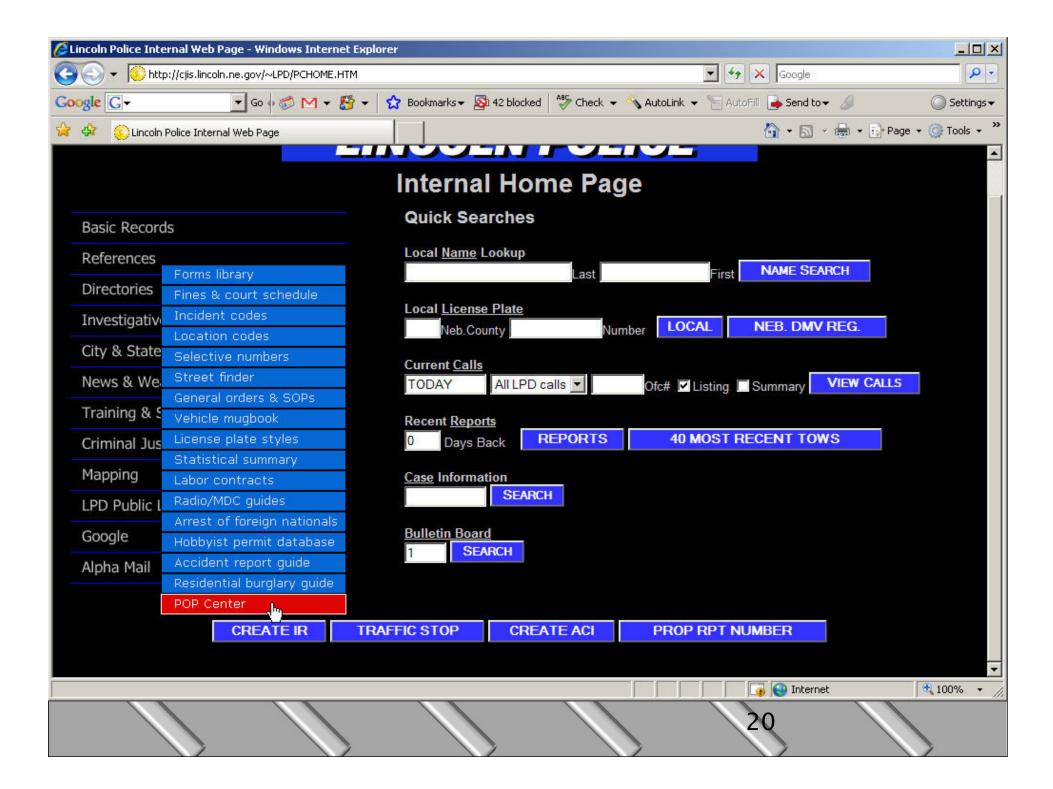
LPD HOME PAGE Dispatch Card Lat otherreportsforthis case View On-line Entry Version Print an IR Copy Case: A8-072817 LPD Incident Details Reported 0005 07-26-2008 23900 - LARCENY - OTHER OR FROM OPEN AREA At 000340 VICTORY LN Status: 30 bet 2340 FRI 07-25-2008 and 0005 SAT 07-26-2008 ACTIVE Reported by: MICHAELA WAGIE, 340 VICTORY LN -WORK- FLAGS: Hate Bias: N Alcohol: N FLAGS: Hate Bias: N Alcohol: N Drugs: N Gang: N STOLEN ITEMS SILVER MISC. PIECES OF SCRAP METAL 30.00 PERSONS INVOLVED Name Race Sex DOB Age/Address (v) SPEEDWAY, MOTORS 118512 / (0) 0003233100 340 VICTORY LANE LINCOLN, NB Officer Assigned Team Ofc assigned Occurred on: 1335 KAUFMAN 1 Rd: 147 Team: 1 LOSS: SCRAP METAL TOTAL LOSS VALUE: \$30 TOTAL DMG AMT: \$.00 INVESTIGATIVE COMMENTS Wagie, Security Guard at Speedway Motors, reported that she saw an unknown while male on the security camera going through a scrap bin of metal. Wagie stated that she called for officers while she was watching the unknown male through the vide of feed from the outdoor camera. Wagie stated that the unknow				
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Status: 30 bet 2340 FRI 07-25-2008 and 0005 SAT 07-26-2008 ACTIVE Reported by: MICHAELA WAGIE, 340 VICTORY LN -WORK- FLAGS: Hate Bias: N Alcohol: N Drugs: N Gang: N STOLEN ITEMS SILVER MISC. PIECES OF SCRAP METAL 30.00 PERSONS INVOLVED Name Race Sex DOB Age/Address (V) SPEEDWAY, MOTORS 118512 / (0) 0003233100 340 VICTORY LANE LINCOLN, NB Officer Assigned Team Ofc assigned Occurred on: 1335 KAUFMAN TOTAL DMG AMT: \$.00 INVESTIGATIVE COMMENTS Wagie, Security Guard at Speedway Motors, reported that she saw an unknown white male on the security camera going through a scrap bin of metal. Wagie stated that she called for officers while she was watching the unknown male through the video feed from the outdoor camera. Wagie stated that the unknown male had ridden what looked to be a mountain bike. He then got off the bicycle and began to grab pieces of scrap metal out of the bin. Once the pieces were out of the bin he wrapped up the pieces in a t-shirt and left. Upon arrival officers searched the area but were unable to locate the suspect Wagie described the suspect as a white juvenile male in a baseball cap and blue jean shorts and. Wagie did not have a copy of the video surveillance but stated that she would notify Ofc when a copy of the video would be available. No suspects at this time. Fields #1618	Case: A8-072817	LPD Incident Details	Reported: 0005 07-26-2008	
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LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT Incident Report Summary



2008 Scrap Metal Thefts This report created on: 9/6/2008





POP Project Undercover Seller

Officer tries to sell without a permit
Sale is completed in violation of the law
Clerks at Salvage Yard Cited
Enforcement vital part of controlling illegal sales by scrap metal dealers

POP Project-Illegal Sale

- Checked List of all Scrap Metal sales
- Checked for those not eligible
- Cite for illegally selling scrap metal

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Enforcement on seller

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 16, 2007

- TO: Capt. Kawamoto
- FROM: Sgt. Grant Richards
- REG: Commendation for Ofc. Lynette Spears

Capt. Kawamoto,

I wanted to make sure that Ofc. Lynette Spears is recognized for the quality work she has done recently regarding a project involving scrap metal sales/offenders. A few months ago Lynette approached me with several questions regarding the Municipal Ordinances regarding scrap metal sales. She had been working on a case and had discovered a small "loophole" in the salvage permit requirement that was being exploited by several people.

Lynette took it upon herself to try to make an impact on this. She contacted two of the City's most prolific salvage dealers and began working with them in an effort to identify people who are selling items to the scrap yards that are prohibited from doing so. A giant task to say the least. Lynette obtained lists from the 2 companies of everyone that has been selling items to them and she then began a review of the lists, documenting numerous people that are prohibited from selling salvage items as per our ordinance. In addition to identifying these people she is notifying the scrap yards of people they can not purchase from any longer, furthering LPD's ability to impact scrap metal thefts even further in our city.

This remains a work in progress. Lynette has issued 2 citations so far and identifed at least 50 others that will eventually be cited for their violation. The sheer volume of information that Lynette has gone through is enormous. Her idea and follow through in this matter is impressive to say the least. Lynette is to be commended for her efforts in her abilities and her desire to take on such a large task.

Nice Job! Creak 2950 Sgt. Grant Richards #790

Dumpster diving From "The Chief's Corner"

Last week at our media briefing, I asked citizens who live in developing subdivisions to call us when they see suspicious activity around construction sites, like someone rummaging around in the rolloff dumpster, or headlights at night. We are trying to reduce the huge loss caused by thefts of copper, aluminum, and brass--which have become a tremendous target of theft worldwide as the prices of these materials has risen. The losses last year totaled nearly \$200,000 in Lincoln. Several new homes and businesses were stripped of all their copper plumbing and even brand-new water meters!

Yesterday, I had a phone call from an unhappy camper who makes his living salvaging metals and other materials from construction sites. He's not very happy with me, because he says it is much more difficult to get permission from builders and contractors to rummage through the roll-offs. He thinks my emphasis on this has made the builders more likely to tell him to get lost when he asks if he can sort through their cast-off material. He feels he's not only making a living, but performing a public service by recycling materials that would otherwise be discarded.

I felt a little guilty--momentarily at least. But it seems to me that if he can't convince the builder that he's helping, that's not really my fault. I think contractors are constantly dealing with theft from construction sites. From the "neighbor" who just needs a couple 2x4's to the career criminal who steals tools, generators, compressors, and anything else that he can carry; builders and subs get sick and tired of trespassers who are costing them (and ultimately all of us) tons of money. I don't blame them for not wanting people around their site at all. If it were me, I'd salvage the recyclables myself, or contract with someone who would do the work and pay me a small fee for the privilege.

I hope citizens continue to call us when they see unusual activity around a construction site. We can always check it out, and see if the person has legitimate permission to be there. My message for the dumpster diver: Get permission, don't do it at night, and never when the crew isn't around. If you're contacted by an officer, you better have the name of the person who authorized you to be on the site, because we'll be checking.

2008 New State Law

- Dealers required to keep records of all purchases
- Send reports to police
- Dealers fingerprint those selling copper or catalytic converters.
- No sales from minors
- Beer kegs must have serial number

Problems and Solutions

Stolen scrap metal is sold to dealers

Email theft reports to dealer
Responsible for checking for those not eligible

Sellers stealing from each other

business installed cameras in parking lots

ATM on site for use with debit card

Change ordinance to check only

Web Sites

Chief's Corner – http://lpd304.blogspot.com - Search for Scrap Metal Lincoln's City Ordinances O - Chapter 5 -http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/attorn/lmc

Scrap Metal, It's a Steal

For additional Information, copies of any document, PowerPoint or reference in this presentation contact **Captain Joy Citta Lincoln Police Department** 575 S. 10th Street Lincoln, Ne 68508 Ipd429@cjis.lincoln.ne.gov

402.441.7239