

Pride in Public Service

I am really excited to report that we ended the 2011/12 fiscal year in much better shape than was anticipated. During the midyear budget presentation it was projected we would end the fiscal year with a general fund deficit in excess of \$950,000. While we do not yet have final numbers, we do know that revenues are coming in slightly higher than expected. The increased revenues, combined with department heads taking a hard line on requests to spend money and the voluntary departure of three employees, have reduced the deficit by approximately \$600K. We intend to carry this same diligence through the 2012/12 fiscal year.

Another source of pride this month is the imminent elimination of the [car seat installation](#) fee. (Yes, I know...). A recent fee study recommended that we charge \$53 to assist and train citizens on proper car seat installation. The fee was designed to cover the time spent by staff to install the seats while educating parents. Thankfully, an observant employee noted that we had lost all of our customers. People were opting not to seek this service because of the fee – a complete travesty. Everyone recognizes that child safety is far more important than collecting a fee for staff to provide a public service. On August 6th the City Council will take formal action to eliminate the fee. Anyone interested in seeking assistance with car seat installation should contact the Police or Fire Departments to schedule an appointment.

Law Enforcement Month

August is law enforcement month so I once again asked the police department to submit something I could use in City Scape. The following information was compiled by Sergeants Matt Jenkins and Luis Rodriguez.

Crime Prevention: Residential Burglaries/ Thefts from Vehicles

Coming home and finding your house ransacked and rummaged through by a burglar will likely leave you with a sense of having been “violated.” Valuables and priceless heirlooms may be gone forever, with little chance for recovery.

Approximately 60 percent of all residential burglaries occur during the day, when most people are away from their homes. Burglars often select their targets based on factors that include: familiarity with the area, (lack of) visibility, accessibility, security, occupancy, and the potential “reward.”

In recent strings of burglaries throughout the bay area, burglars have been working in groups looking for vacant houses. The would-be burglars will approach a potential target home and knock on the doors or windows. If the resident answers, they ask for someone by name. When they are told that person does not live there, they apologize for knocking on the wrong door and quickly move along. If there is no answer at the door, the group assembles and attempts to make entry through a rear door.

The risk of being a victim of a residential burglary can greatly be reduced if residents follow some simple guidelines:

- Keep doors locked and dead bolted.
- Keeps all windows locked, using pin locks. Pin locks are much more difficult to defeat for a burglar than standard window locks.
- Use a bar or wooden dowel in sliding glass doors.
- Do not keep a key hidden outside. It is likely that a burglar can find the key.
- Keep valuables locked up.

- Keep landscaping trimmed so that there is no place for someone to hide.
- If you are going to be away from your house overnight, use timers on lights, have your mail and newspaper stopped or picked up by a neighbor, and notify your neighbors.

To test your house, think like a burglar – check your house, or have a friend check your house, looking for weak points where a burglar could gain entry.

Having a complete inventory, including pictures and serial numbers, of your valuables will improve the chances of the items being recovered in the event that they are stolen. The inventory should be stored off site or locked in a safe that cannot be removed.

If you come home and find that you have been a victim of a burglar, **DO NOT ENTER YOUR HOME**. Immediately call 9-1-1 and await police arrival. The burglar(s) could still be in the house, and you do not want to be confronted by them. Officers will check your home and make sure it is safe for you to enter.

In addition to residential Burglaries residents should be aware of burglaries and thefts from vehicles. Locking your vehicles, not keeping valuables or personal financial information in your vehicles and keeping anything that may look like something of value out of sight or in the trunk can greatly reduce your chances of being a victim of a theft from a vehicle.

Personal financial information such as checks and credit cards that are stolen will often be used within a very short amount of time in hopes of maximizing the amount of money a thief can obtain before the cards and checks are cancelled. If your personal financial information is stolen you should immediately contact your bank to cancel credit cards and place an alert on your account.

Although Healdsburg is a relatively safe city, it is not immune from crimes such as residential burglaries or thefts from vehicles. Within the past year the Healdsburg Police Department has taken 30 reports of residential burglaries. Additionally, the Healdsburg Police Department has taken 40 reports of thefts from vehicles. Of the 40 vehicles that had items stolen from them only 8 were locked at the time of the theft. The overwhelming majority were left unlocked making it easy for thieves to gain entry into the vehicles and have access to the items left inside. Although a thief can break a window to gain entry into a locked vehicle, in most cases thieves take advantage of unlocked vehicles as they provide easy access and are less likely to draw attention to the crime being committed.

Healdsburg area residents can [sign up with Nixle.com](https://www.nixle.com) to receive notifications of crime and other advisories occurring in Healdsburg. Information, such as currently ongoing events and suspect descriptions, is sent via email or text messages to subscribers.