



**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

**SUBMISSION TO THE 2008 HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING**

**NEW YORK STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE VEHICLE
BREAK-IN INITIATIVE Phase I & II**

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University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

University Police

May 19, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm my support for the nomination of the New York State University at Buffalo Police Department's Vehicle Break-In Project for this year's Herman Goldstein Award.

This project, as detailed in the nomination, embodied the cooperation of many within the University community, including University students, officials, faculty and staff. After having a record number of vehicle break-ins in 2007, this project virtually stopped vehicle break-ins in our University community.

This project has received a great deal of attention both locally and throughout our State University system and went a long way in stopping auto break-ins.

Thank you for your consideration in this nomination.

Sincerely,


Gerald W. Schoenle Jr.
Chief of University Police

NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative 2008

SUMMARY

An examination of the effectiveness of a police department must include how they deal with quality of life issues, those issues that fall beyond the scope of traditional police methodologies. Violent crime gets the media attention, however, petty/nuisance crime has an equal potential to impact a community and how its members perceive their place in it. One of our first projects under the new chief was to address the increasing problem of vehicle break-ins. Vehicle break-ins nationwide are on the rise largely due to the proliferation of electronic devices such as I-pods & GPS units. Western New York and The State University of New York at Buffalo have not been spared. What happens when a vehicle is broken in to? First, there is the psychological impact of violation of one's personal space that a victim feels, much the same way a homeowner feels about his home after it is has been burglarized. Besides the personal violation, the victim perceives that the community is no longer safe. This can lead to apathy and a feeling of helplessness. The research tells us that when community members feel secure in their environment they develop a sense of ownership and territoriality which makes them more likely to become involved, report crime and defend their space. There is the financial component as well. The loss of productivity as the victim often must take time off work to have the damages repaired (In 2007, all reported Vehicle Break-Ins at UB involved a smashed window). The costs of the repairs are then passed on to other community members by way of higher

insurance rates. There is also the potential for loss of revenue because the victim is reluctant to patronize businesses in the area. The impact of the crime reached beyond the primary victim.

In December of 2007, the university saw a rash of vehicle break-ins on the south campus. The crime prevention unit was tasked with developing a program to prevent/reduce the instances of vehicle break-ins utilizing the SARA Model of Problem Solving. Since vehicle break-ins are largely preventable, we decided to focus on a combination of public education and target hardening. Several months earlier I had developed a Vehicle Break-In Report Card. This brochure would be part informational pamphlet and part report card which could be issued to a vehicle when a valuable item was observed in plain view. During the distribution period each vehicle would receive either a passing or failing grade. This Vehicle Break-In Report Card also being utilized by police departments in Arlington & Carrollton, Texas would be the back bone of the program. The Report Card/Grade aspect tied in nicely with the educational mission of the institution and was picked up on by the local media. Signage will play an important role in the initiative and the wording chosen will be the template for the additional public service announcements.

Large signs with attached brochure dispensers were placed at strategic locations of high visibility. A time frame of two weeks was decided upon to avoid "warning fatigue". The initiative would kick off on the first day of classes of the January 2008 semester. We gave the program a name: **NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative 2008 (Phase I)**. Once we had the name in place it

was time to generate media interest. Because of the large educational component of the program media attention was critical. Our next step was to generate a press release to outline the initiative using power words such as aggressive, innovative, and unique. Enthusiasm and belief in your program creates interest and interest generates momentum. Before the start date of the program, an article appeared in one of the University Newspapers: The Reporter titled "Would your car make the grade? University Police raising awareness of vulnerability to vehicle break-ins" by News Editor Sue Wuetcher.

Distribution of the Vehicle Break-In Report Cards would take place on Monday and Tuesday. This would allow us to maximize coverage by targeting student with MWF & Tues/Thurs schedules. Utilizing road patrols and student police aides, approximately 2500 report cards were distributed at varying times during the two-day period. They were asked to record the parking hangtag number of those vehicles who received a failing grade. This would be used at a later date to generate a data base of E-mail addresses. Community members with a failing grade would receive a follow-up E-mail explaining in further detail the initiative and the reason for the failing grade. Other informational outlets were available to us and are listed in the next section of this report.

We declared the program a success. Feedback from our community has been positive. Using the community policing model we have balanced the traditional reactive police response to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centering on the causes of crime and disorder. We received some good media attention including 4 newspaper articles, one local TV station news story

and a national recognition in The Campus Crime News Letter. I have authored an article: NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative; An Exercise in Problem Oriented Policing. It has been accepted for publication and will appear in the next edition of the NECUSA(Northeastern College &University Safety Association) journal. Due to the increase of vehicle break-ins combined with the transient nature of a college community it was decided that the initiative should be an ongoing project with different reinforcing phases. Starting on 3/17/08 with the resumption of classes following the spring break we began Phase II of the initiative. We kept our momentum going with a reinforcing blitz on the south campus and than we moved it north. We distributed 8,000 Report Cards in total and developed some new and creative ways to educate the public. At The State University of New York at Buffalo we have had zero reported vehicle break-ins since the beginning of the year while surrounding jurisdictions continue to see an increase. *That is until the early morning hours of 3/6.*

At approximately 2:15 AM, patrols responded to a report of a vehicle break-in in progress at the Hadley Village Apartment Complex on the north campus. Three white males were observed smashing the windows of two parked cars. They fled in a dark colored Jeep-like vehicle. Approximately 45 minutes later, Lt. Chris Bartolomei while on routine patrol observed a vehicle matching the earlier description traveling west on Chestnut Ridge Road in the Town of Amherst. Lt. Bartolomei pulled over the vehicle and subsequently arrested three suspects, recovering property from eight vehicle break-ins at the University and three in the Town of Amherst.

In the final analysis the project has succeeded on 2 levels. We removed the opportunity & ability components of the crime triangle through education and voluntary public compliance. It would also appear that we are taking away the 3rd component, desire on the part of the criminal. The officer's awareness & attentiveness to the issue has increased as a direct result of the project. The handful of vehicle break-ins that have occurred since the project inception have resulted in arrest. We have sought to find a cure for the ailment instead of merely treating the symptoms. It is unrealistic to expect to eliminate crime altogether in a given area. Community policing concepts are not a panacea but a series of pixels in the emerging picture of effective/collaborative crime reduction. We strive to balance traditional reactive police methodologies with creative and innovative ideas to address the root causes of crime & disorder utilizing all available community resources through citizen partnership. The initiative continues...



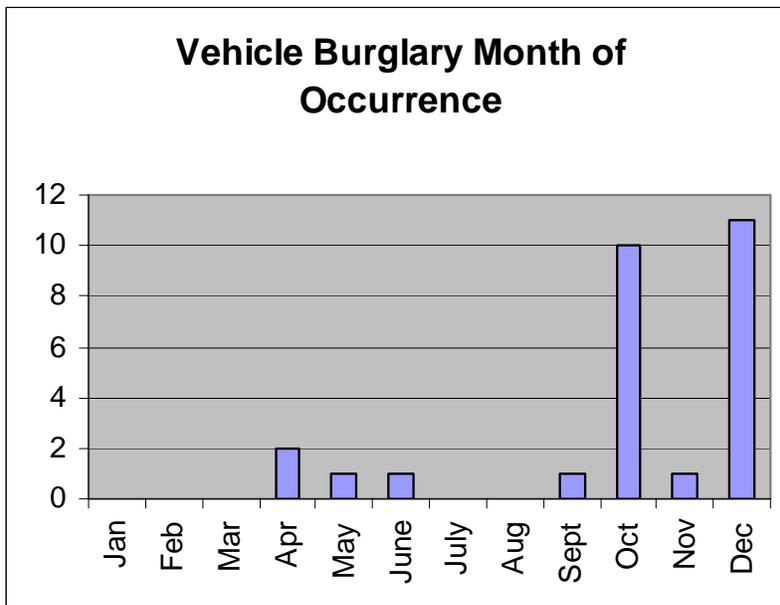
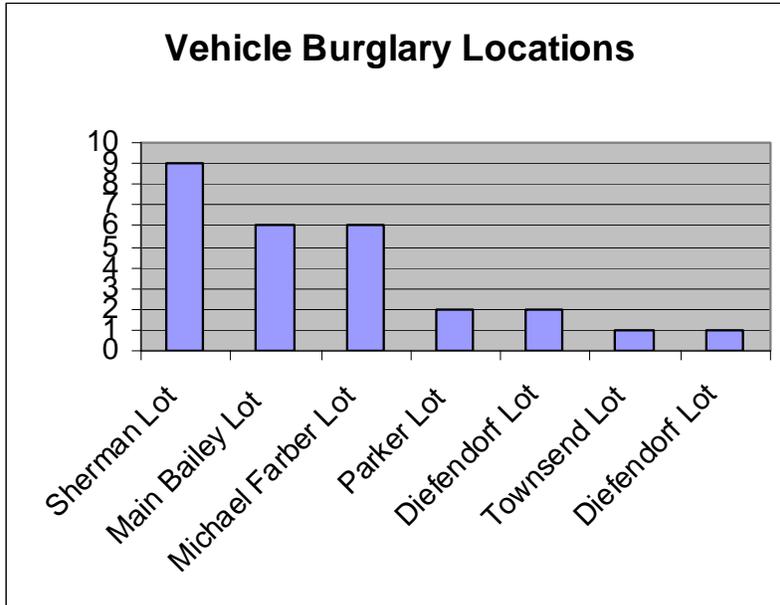
NYS University Police Vehicle Burglary Initiative 2008 (Phase I)

Objective:

Auto-burglary prevention, like all crime prevention, involves limiting the criminal's ability and/or opportunity to commit the crime. With very little time and effort, citizens can make a huge difference in their vulnerability to auto-burglary. Beginning on January 14th, the University Police Department will begin an aggressive multi-media campaign to increase public awareness. Through the use of signs, brochures, public service announcements, Auto Burglary Report Cards and stepped up patrols it is our objective to reduce the instances of auto burglary at The University at Buffalo.

Crime Analysis:

In 2007, there were 27 vehicle burglaries on the SUNY at Buffalo Main St. Campus. For purpose of this report, analysis has been limited to instances where the perpetrators objective seems to be the traditional "smash & grab" as opposed to random acts of criminal mischief. Nine instances occurred in the Sherman Lot, 6 Main Bailey, 6 Michael Farber, 2 Parker Lot, 2 Diefendorf Lot, 1 Townsend Lot, and 1 Diefendorf Lot. The largest number occurred in the month of October (10) and December (11). Items being targeted are car radios, GPS units, I-Pods and other small electronic devices. In all instances a driver or passenger side window was smashed in order to gain entry. Time of occurrence is between 6:30AM and 6:00PM, M-F. In seven instances windows were smashed but nothing was reported missing. Usually these have occurred in conjunction with other incidents involving theft so it can be assumed that the motive was larceny. It becomes more difficult to pinpoint time of occurrence in student overnight parking lots since often times residents go for several days without accessing their vehicle.



Implementation:

1. 4000 Copies of the departments Vehicle Burglary Report Card have been printed for distribution.
2. Beginning on 01/14/08 and ending on 01/25/08 free standing double sided signs with attached brochure dispensers will be placed at the following strategic locations:

- -South entrance Sherman Hall
- -East entrance Sherman Hall
- -North entrance Farber Hall
- -Atrium entrance
- -Harriman Hall main entrance
- -Health Science Library main entrance

Signs will be monitored on a daily basis and brochure replenished as needed. Report Cards will be placed at the North & South Campus Parking & Transportation Offices.

- **Sign Content:**

Safety Alert

The following message is a safety alert from the University Police: **When parking your vehicle, make sure not to leave valuables in plain view. Secure items such as: laptops, GPS units, radar detectors, and pull-out radios in your trunk or out of sight. If possible, secure mounting hardware out of sight as this can be an indication to thieves that a device might be inside the vehicle. As always, please be vigilant for suspicious activity in and around campus parking lots and immediately report this activity to the University Police, using any Blue Light Phone or by calling 645-2222.**

Let's work together for a safe community.

- **Sign Photograph:**



3. Beginning on 01/14/08 and ending on 01/25/08 the following announcement will be broadcast on **UB-Alert 1620AM**:

**The following message is a safety alert from the University Police:
When parking your vehicle, make sure not to leave valuables in plain view. Secure items such as: laptops, GPS units, radar detectors, and pull-out radios in your trunk or out of sight. If possible, secure mounting hardware out of sight as this can be an indication to thieves that a device might be inside the vehicle. As always, please be vigilant for suspicious activity in and around campus parking lots and immediately report this activity to the University Police, using any Blue Light Phone or by calling 645-2222. Let's work together for a safe community.**

4. Lt. Urbanek has arranged to have PSA's fill out and distribute the department's Vehicle Burglary Report Card to all vehicles parked in the Sherman, Main Bailey & Michael Farber Parking Lots. If an unsafe condition is observed and the vehicle gets a failing grade, the vehicles plate and hangtag numbers will be recorded and forwarded to Ptlm. Colton or Lt. Zysek. They will attempt to make contact with the owner via a courtesy call. PSA's will use the attached **Vehicle Burglary Report Card Distribution Form** to track time, date, location and number of reports given out. They will also use the form to record license plate & hang-tag information. Distribution will take place on Monday 01/14/08 at 8AM & 4PM and Tuesday 01/15/08 at 8AM & 4PM.

5. Lt. Sticht will have the dispatchers attach the above safety alert (see # 3) to our **Daily Campus Road Condition Hot Line**. This message will run 01/14/08 thru 02/14/08.

6. Lt. Zysek has arranged for the above safety alert (see # 3) to appear on the timely warning section of the **UBPD Web Page** as well as **MY UB**. This alert will run from 1/14/08 thru 1/21/08 on **MY UB** and from 1/14/08 thru 2/14/08 on the **UBPD Web Page**.

7. We have enlisted the help of all available UB media outlets. The following press release has been sent to the **Spectrum, Reporter & WBFO**. As of this writing Sue Wuetcher, Editor of the **Reporter** has agreed to do a story on the initiative which will appear in the Jan. 17th edition:

Press Release:

Would you get an 'A' on your vehicle-burglary report card?

University Police 2008 Vehicle Burglary Initiative

2007 saw an increase in vehicle break-ins on the UB Main St. Campus. There were over twenty five (25) auto-burglaries on campus involving a loss of thousands of dollars in stolen property and damages. Most of these auto-burglaries involved smashed windows to gain entry to locked vehicles. Auto-burglary prevention, like all crime prevention, involves limiting the criminal's ability and/or opportunity to commit the crime. With very little time and effort, citizens can make a huge difference in their vulnerability to auto-burglary. Beginning on January 14th the University Police Dept. will begin an aggressive multi-media campaign to increase public awareness. Through the use of signs, brochure, public service announcements, auto burglary report cards and stepped up patrols it is our objective to reduce the instances of auto burglary on campus. This semester you may see uniformed Student University Police Aides putting slips of paper on windshields of parked cars, but they're not tickets. It's a Vehicle Burglary Report Card. Motorists will receive a pass or fail depending on whether an unsafe condition is observed. When possible, officers will be following up with a courtesy call to the parking permit holder. It generally takes a mere few seconds to secure your valuables, but it will take only a few seconds more for a thief to break in and steal valuables left in plain sight. The key to crime prevention is a partnership through education. Let's work together for a safe community.

8. Patrols will be asked to maintain a visible presence in the South Campus parking lots and increase challenges to undesirables.

9. The initiative will be monitored and adjusted as needed.

10. Long term analysis will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Assessment:

The University Police Vehicle Burglary Initiative 2008 (Phase 1) was implemented as outlined above. In total, Approx. 2500 Vehicle Burglary Report Cards were distributed to the target areas on 1/14 & 1/15 by patrol officers and Student Police Aides. A special thanks to Lt. Zysek & Officers Hansen and Anderson for their assistance. An additional 1000 were distributed at the planned information points (library, parking & transportation office and holders attached to the signage.) Vehicles receiving a failing grade on their report card had their hang tag information recorded for later follow-up. Through the Parking & Transportation office records we were able to acquire E-mail addresses for 100% of hangtags and the following E-mail was sent to 96 students & staff members:

Dear SUNY at Buffalo Community Member,

In an attempt to raise awareness about the increasing problem of vehicle break-ins, The NYS University Police have implemented the Vehicle Break-In Initiative 2008. During the past several weeks, our officers have been conducting inspections and issuing Vehicle Break-In Report Cards to parked vehicles at UB. Our records indicate that you received a failing grade on your report card. What this means is that during the day of our inspection a potentially unsafe condition was observed inside your vehicle. In most instances, this condition consisted of some type of valuable item in plain view. Our officers observed such items as GPS units, satellite radios, I-pods, radar detectors and cell phones. Often times the mere presence of mounting hardware can be an indicator to a thief that valuables are present inside the vehicle. In the vast majority of instances, a window is smashed to gain entry furthering the economic impact to the victim. Auto break-in prevention, like all crime prevention, involves limiting the criminal's ability and/or opportunity to commit the crime. With very little time and effort, you can make a huge difference in your vulnerability. It generally takes a mere few seconds to secure your valuables, but it will take only a few seconds more for a thief to break in and steal valuables left in plain sight. Let's work together for a safe community.

Thank you,

We reached out to the local media with positive results. We did receive the following attention:

- The Spectrum 1/16/08 "University Police give grades this year"
- The Reporter 1/17/08 "Would your vehicle make the grade? University Police raising awareness of vulnerability to vehicle break-ins"
- News story on WGRZ 5:00pm News 1/17
- National News letter CAMPUS CRIME

Overall the initiative went off as planned. We received some good media attention including national recognition in The Campus Crime News Letter. Feedback from community members was also positive. Weather hindered distribution to a degree. To date there have been no reports of vehicle break-ins on the South Campus. Situation will continue to be monitored and the initiative will be reinstated as needed. Plans are in the works to move the initiative to the North Campus in the near future.



NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative 2008 (Phase II)

Prepared by Ptlm. W. Colton

Objective:

Vehicle break-ins continue to rise not just in WNY but across the US. This appears to be largely due to the proliferation of electronic devices such as I-pods & GPS units. UB had 55 reported instances in 2007. On 01/14/08 The NYS University Police implemented Phase 1 of the Vehicle Break-In Initiative 2008. The University remained break-in free through 03/06/08 with the arrest of 3 suspects responsible for at least 8 break-ins at UB and possibly more in the Town of Amherst (Refer CD# 2008-002412). Thanks to some solid police work by Lt. Chris Bartolomei and his officers, all property stolen has been recovered and will be returned to the victims in the near future. This recent incident serves to reaffirm our commitment to the program. We continue to lead the region in proactive and creative ways to combat this growing problem while balancing traditional reactive police methodologies with community based problem solving efforts. Phase II will begin with the resumption of classes on 3/17/08. Through the use of signs, brochures, public service announcements, The Vehicle Break-In Report Card, stepped up patrols and an aggressive media campaign, we will continue to partner with the community to reduce crime. Public cooperation is paramount to the success of the program.

Implementation:

*In the interest of accuracy, we will no longer refer to the program as **The Vehicle Burglary Initiative**. Henceforth it will be referred to as **The Vehicle Break-In Initiative**. The next printing of the Report Card will reflect these changes in addition of the following information: (See Attached):

- **A garage door opener left in a vehicle along with a registration card which most motorists keep in the glove box can provide a thief with your home address and the means to gain entry.**

- **If possible, secure mounting hardware out of sight. It could indicate to a thief that a device is present.**
- **A check box has been added for garage door opener.**

1. 6000 Copies of the department **Vehicle Break-In Report Card** have been printed for distribution. We will distribute Mon (3/17) & Tues (3/18) on the South Campus and Mon (3/24) & Tues (3/25) on the North Campus. Road Patrols will be asked to take a more active role with distribution during Phase II. Each officer will be asked to fill out and distribute 100 brochures during his tour of duty on all 4 shifts during this 4 day period. They will be asked to fill out the **Vehicle Break-In Distribution Form** (1 for each lot) and record the parking hang tag type & number of only those vehicles that have received a failing grade on the report card. The hang tag information will be used at a later date to create an e-mail database for follow-up. I will be detailed exclusively to the Initiative between the hours of 7AM – 3PM on all 4 days. I am able to distribute between 700 & 1000 Report Cards during an 8 hour tour of duty.

2. Signs

- Beginning on 03/17/08 and ending on 03/23/08 free standing double sided signs with attached brochure dispensers will be placed at locations on the South Campus.
- Beginning on 03/24/08 and ending on 03/30/08 free standing double sided signs with attached brochure dispensers will be placed at strategic locations on the North Campus

Signs will be monitored on a daily basis and brochures replenished as needed. Report Cards will be placed at the North & South Campus Parking & Transportation Offices.

- Sign content: **Unchanged**

3. Beginning on 03/17/08 and ending on 03/28/08 the following announcement will be broadcast on **UB-Alert 1620AM: Unchanged**

4. Beginning on 3/11 and ending on 3/30 the following message slides will appear on the scrolling marquee in front of the Student Union:

Slide 1:

Safety Alert from UPD: You can prevent Vehicle Break-ins



Slide 2:

Valuables left in plain view in vehicles attract thieves.



Slide 3:

Don't be a victim. Secure items out of sight.



Slide 4:

Report any suspicious activity - 645-2222



Slide 5:

Let's work together for a safe community



5. Beginning on 3/17 and ending on 3/30 the following slides will appear on The Residence Halls & Apartments Cable TV Information Channel:

Safety Alert



The following is a safety Alert from the University Police:

When parking your vehicle, make sure not to leave valuables in plain view. Secure items such as: laptops, GPS units, radar detectors, and pull-out radios in your trunk or out of sight.

Safety Alert



If possible, secure mounting hardware out of sight as this can be an indication to thieves that a device might be present inside the vehicle.

Safety Alert



As always, please be vigilant for suspicious activity in and around campus parking lots and immediately report this activity to the University Police, using any Blue Light Phone or by calling 645-2222. Let's work together for a safe community.

6. Lt. Sticht will have the dispatchers attach the following safety alert to our **Daily Campus Road Condition Hot Line**. This message will run 03/17/08 thru 03/30/08: Content: **Unchanged**

7. I have authored an article titled: **New York State University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative 2008, An Exercise in Problem Oriented Police**. With the help of Assistant Chief Linde, we will be submitting to NECUSA (Northeast Colleges & Universities Security Association, Inc.) for publication.

8. Lt. Zysek has arranged for the above safety alert (see # 3) to appear on the timely warning section of the **UBPD Web Page** as well as **MY UB**. This alert will run from 1/14/08 thru 1/21/08 on **MY UB** and from 1/14/08 thru 2/14/08 on the **UBPD Web Page**.

9. We have enlisted the help of all available UB media outlets. The following press release has been sent to the **Spectrum, Reporter, WBFO** and **Buffalo News**. Sue Wuetcher, Editor of the **Reporter** did a follow-up story on Phase II of the initiative which did appear in the March 6th edition; Making the grade on

vehicle break-ins. Joann Pan, News Editor for the **Spectrum** wrote an article appearing in the March 21st edition; suspected individuals behind recent on-campus car break-ins caught.

Press Release:

**University Police 2008 Vehicle Break-in Initiative
Phase II**

Vehicle break-ins nationwide are on the rise largely due to the proliferation of electronic devices such as I-pods & GPS units. WNY & the University at Buffalo have not been spared. In January, The University Police launched its Vehicle Burglary Initiative 2008. This past month we distributed almost 4000 Vehicle Burglary report cards to staff & student vehicles parked in South Campus parking lots and followed up with E-mail messages to those drivers who received a failing grade. Our aggressive multi-media campaign has received local and national attention and has been recognized for the proactive nature of the undertaking. Auto-burglary prevention, like all crime prevention, involves limiting the criminal's ability and/or opportunity to commit the crime. With very little time and effort, citizens can make a huge difference in their vulnerability. To date we have not had one reported vehicle break-in at UB however, we are not stopping there. This spring we will be expanding the program to include the North campus. Starting with the resumption of classes on March 17, officers will again be out in force this time on both campuses. We hope to distribute 6-8,000 vehicle burglary report cards to motorists and at the same time increasing our visibility. Once again we will be asking the media to help spread our message. Vehicle Burglary is a quality of life crime that has the potential to affect us all. The key to crime prevention is education and community partnership. Let's work together for a safe community.

10. Patrols will be asked to maintain a visible presence on both campus parking lots and increase challenges to undesirables.

11. The initiative will be monitored and adjusted as needed. Long term analysis will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Conclusion:

Approx. 5000 Report Cards were distributed during the 4-day period. Approx. **450** motorists "failed" the inspection process. GPS Units, Satellite radios, garage

door openers and I-pods continue to be the predominant items patrols are seeing. Overall community response continues to be positive and members seem to be receptive to the message. With the hangtag information, we have created a database of E-mail addresses and the following message has been sent to those who have failed the inspection:

- E-mail content: **Unchanged** from phase I.

The Parking & Transportation Office will allow us to include the Vehicle Break-In Report Card in their annual hang tag mailing. If we decide to distribute we will need Approx. 8,000 copies by July 30, 2008.

Strategies for future consideration:

- Due to the transient nature of our community reinforcing phases are recommended in the future. Perhaps twice per year at the beginning of each semester.
- Decoy car
- Portable scrolling marquees to broadcast warnings and alerts
- Surveillance cameras
- Mass Mailing of Vehicle Burglary Report Card with Parking Hang Tags in August of 2008.
- Poster campaign for next Holiday Season (see attached poster)





Vehicle Break-In Report Card

At the University Police Department we are concerned for your safety and the safety of your property. Vehicle Larceny is a common type of property crime, yet it is a very easy crime to prevent. We have completed this form today to help you keep your property safe.

Your vehicle has:

PASSED FAILED

If your vehicle failed it was one of these reasons:

- Valuables in Plain View
- Keys Left in Vehicle
- Window Open
- Garage Door Opener
- Other _____

Thank you for your support!

Lets work together for a safer community!

For questions/comments call: 645-2227

OTHER TIPS:

- Use an anti-theft device
- Do not put your name on your key ring
- Do not leave your garage door opener in your car
- Report Suspicious activity immediately



STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE

Bissell Hall (Amherst Campus)
 Buffalo, NY 14260-4900
 Phone: 716.645.2227
 Fax: 716.645.3758
 Emergencies & Services: 716.645.2222
 Email: www.public-safety.buffalo.edu/
 Web site address: <http://www.public-safety.buffalo.edu/>

PARKING & TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

102 Spaulding Quad (N. Campus)
 Phone: 716.645.3943
 104 Harriman (Main St. Campus)
 Phone: 716.829.2887
 Web site address: <http://www.ub-parking.buffalo.edu/>



Report Card

A Guide to Prevention

NY State University Police

Parking & Transportation Services



Gerald W. Schoenle
Chief Of Police

AUTO BREAK-INS ARE PREVENTABLE!

Most thefts from motor vehicles are preventable. There are just a few things you need to do to prevent them. Once you realize the steps you need to take, we are counting on you to do them on a continual basis.

- **C**lose your windows and lock your doors.
- **R**emove valuables or place them in the trunk.
- **R**emove "pull-out" style radio face plates (if equipped).
- **D**o not leave keys in the car.
- **D**o not leave car running.
- **I**f possible, secure mounting hardware out of sight. It could indicate to a thief that a device is present.

WHY AUTO BREAK-INS?

Due to the proliferation of electronic devices such as GPS units and L-Pods instances of Vehicle Break-Ins are on the rise nationwide. The reason Vehicle Break-Ins are becoming so commonplace is because people make it far too easy and tempting for a thief to gain access to their vehicle by leaving valuables in plain view.

Thieves can quickly enter vehicles, often sight unseen. Many use the stolen items to help them get drugs to support their addiction. Increasingly, we are finding that thieves are using personal information found in vehicles to commit identity theft.

A garage door opener left in a vehicle along with a registration card which most motorists keep in the glove box can provide a thief with your home address and the means to gain entry.



REMEMBER:



In **30** seconds a thief can break into your car and take your valuables!

It takes **20** seconds to put your valuables into your trunk, out of sight!



PLEASE POST DATE: _____ THRU: _____

UNIVERSITY POLICE SAFETY ALERT!

The following message is a safety alert from the University Police: When parking your vehicle, make sure not to leave valuables in plain view. Secure items such as: GPS units, radar detectors, and pull-out radios in the trunk or out of sight. If possible, secure mounting hardware out of sight as this can be an indication to thieves that a device might be inside the vehicle. As always, please be vigilant for suspicious activity in and around the parking lots and report this activity to the University Police immediately, using any Blue Light Phone or by calling 645-2222.

Let's work together for a safe community.

Report any crime on campus by dialing 645-2222,
or 2222 from a campus phone.
Dial 911 from off campus.



Would your car make the grade?

University Police raising awareness of vulnerability to vehicle break-ins

By **SUE WUETCHER**
Reporter/Editor

WOULD you get a passing grade on your vehicle burglary report card? Or is your car a target for would-be thieves?

Many UB drivers will get the opportunity to find out as part of a multimedia campaign designed by University Police to increase drivers' awareness of their vulnerability to automobile break-ins.

The University Police Vehicle Burglary Initiative 2008, developed by Wayne Colton, community liaison officer, began on Monday and will continue through Jan. 25. Its objective is to reduce the instances of auto burglary at UB through the use of signs, brochures, public service announcements, stepped up patrols and a vehicle burglary report card.

The initiative initially is targeted toward South Campus, where 27 vehicle burglaries were recorded in 2007, a sharp increase over the past few years, Colton said. He described these burglaries as traditional "smash and grab" incidents, where windows in the vehicles were broken and items, usually car radios, GPS units, I-pods and other small electronic devices, were taken.

"Auto-burglary prevention, like all crime prevention, involves limiting the criminal's ability and/or opportunity to commit the crime," Colton said. "With very little time and effort, citizens can make a huge difference in their vulner-

ability to auto burglary."

University Police has erected "safety alert" signs in several key locations on the South Campus, including at entrances to Sherman, Farber, Squire and Harriman halls, Kimball Tower, the Buffalo Materials Research Center building and at the main entrance to the Health Sciences Library. The message on the signs urges drivers not to leave valuables in plain sight in their cars

Alert 1620-AM, the campus traffic radio station, and through Feb. 12 on MyUB (<http://www.buffalo.edu/aboutmyub/>), a Web-based personal portal; on the University Police's Web site (<http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/public-safety/announcements.shtml>); and on the Campus Road Condition Hot Line (645-2345), a daily update of weather, road conditions and school closing

that could lead to a break-in, such as property left in plain view, keys left in the vehicle, a window left open or other unsafe conditions. Aides noted the license plate and hangtag numbers of any vehicles receiving a failing grade and attempts will be made to contact the owner to emphasize the safety message, Colton said.

The report card also will be available in dispensers at the free-standing safety alert signs and in the Parking and Transportation Services offices in 102 Spaulding Quad, Ellicott Complex, North Campus, and 104 Harriman, South Campus.

Although the current safety initiative is geared toward South Campus—Colton called the 2007 statistics for vehicle break-ins on North Campus "insignificant"—he urged drivers who park on the North Campus to be aware as well of unsafe conditions in their vehicles.

"It generally takes a mere few seconds to secure your valuables, but it will take only a few seconds more for a thief to break in and steal valuables left in plain sight," he said. "The key to crime prevention is a partnership through education."

Colton said he will be monitoring conditions on both campuses and the initiative will be adjusted as needed. "It's a living breathing program," he noted.

For further information, go to <http://www.public-safety.buffalo.edu> or call University Police at 645-2227.



Wayne Colton, community liaison officer for University Police, places an Auto Burglary Report Card under a windshield wiper of a car parked in the Main-Bailey Lot, South Campus, on Monday.

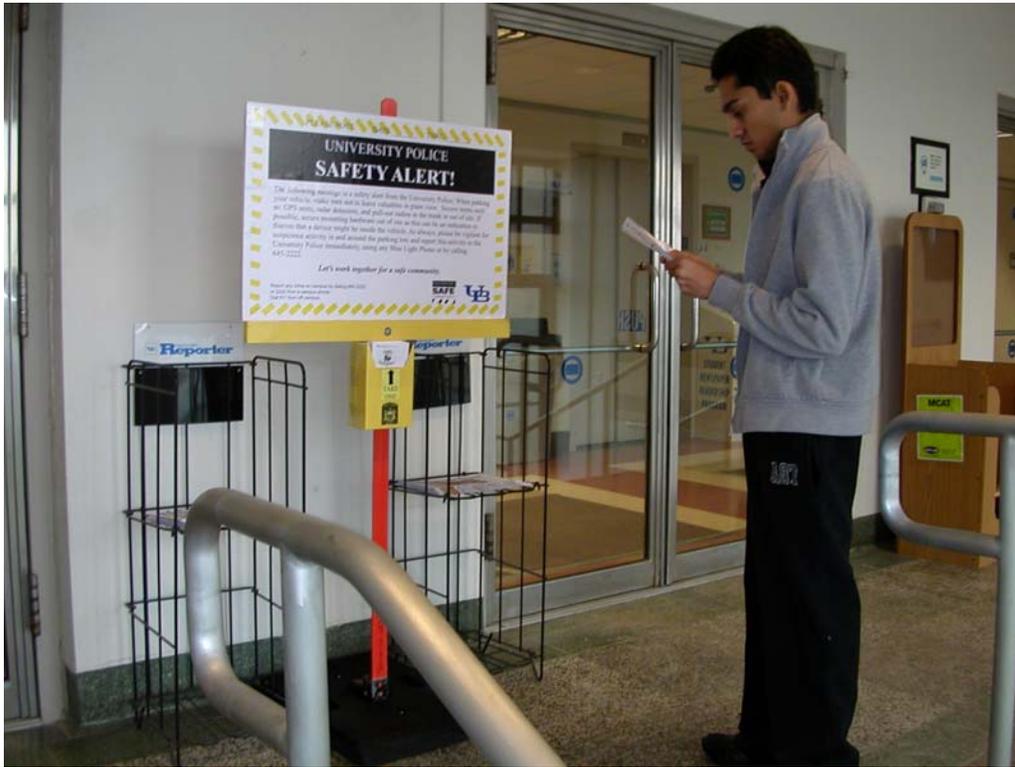
PHOTO: NANCY J. PARISI

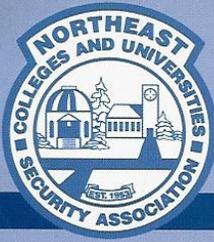
and to be vigilant for suspicious activity in and around campus parking lots. The signs also provide the telephone number for University Police—645-2222—and direct individuals to use any Blue Light Phone to contact University Police.

That message also is being broadcast through Jan. 25 on UB-

information.

Uniformed student police aides distributed vehicle burglary report cards to vehicles parked in the Sherman, Main-Bailey and Michael-Farber lots from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday. The aides graded cars based on whether they observed conditions





"The First Campus Law Enforcement Organization"
EST. 1953

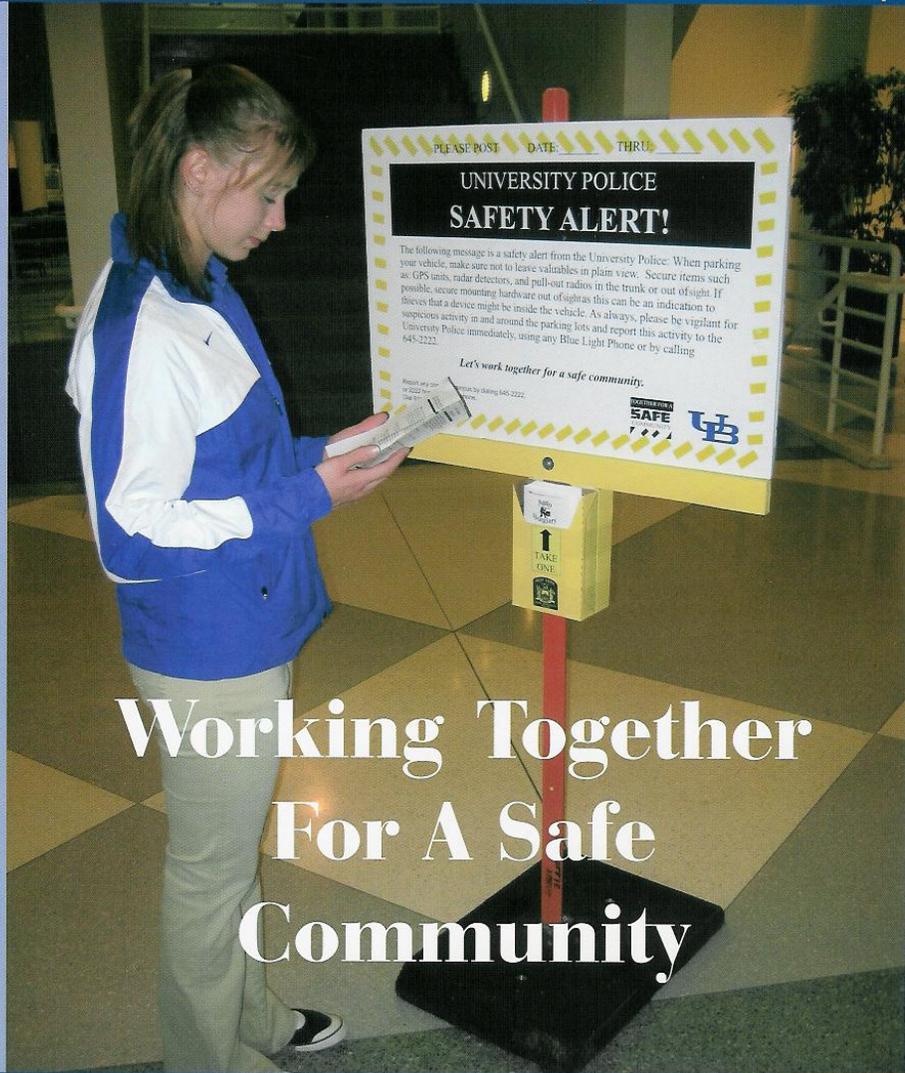
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NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative

An Exercise in Problem Oriented Policing

By Wayne Colton
University at Buffalo

When Gerald Schoenle took over as Chief of The New York State University Police at Buffalo in June of 2006, he had a clear vision of where he wanted to take the department in the future. The first vision was to become the first SUNY Police Department to become accredited by the NYSDCJS (New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services). This came to fruition in 2007. The second vision was to reinforce our commitment to the principles of Community Policing, Problem Oriented Policing and CEPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) and to apply these principles to address social & quality of life issues in a large multi-cultural university setting. Chief Schoenle has challenged the membership to develop creative and innovative ways to address the root causes of crime & disorder utilizing all available community resources through citizen partnership.

An examination of the effectiveness of a police department must include how they deal with quality of life issues, those issues that fall beyond the scope of traditional police methodologies. Violent crime gets the media attention, however, petty/nuisance crime has an equal potential to impact a community and how its members perceive their place in it. One of our first projects under the new chief was to address the increasing problem of vehicle

break-ins. Vehicle break-ins nationwide are on the rise largely due to the proliferation of electronic devices such as I-pods & GPS units. Western New York and The State University of New York at Buffalo have not been spared. What happens when a vehicle is broken in to? First, there is the psychological impact of violation of one's personal space that a victim feels, much the same way a homeowner feels about his home after it has been burglarized. Besides the personal violation, the victim perceives that the community is no longer safe. This can lead to apathy and a feeling of helplessness. The research tells us that when community members feel secure in their environment they develop a sense of ownership and territoriality which makes them more likely to become involved, report crime and defend their space. There is the financial component as well. The loss of productivity because the victim often must take time off work to have the damages repaired (In 2007, all reported Vehicle Break-Ins at UB involved a smashed window). The costs of the repairs are passed on to other community members by way of higher insurance rates. There is also the potential for loss of revenue because the victim is reluctant to patronize businesses in the area. The impact of the crime reached beyond the primary victim.

The University at Buffalo has three geographically separate

campuses, the north campus in the Town of Amherst, the south campus and the downtown campus including the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus in the City of Buffalo. The Town of Amherst is a suburban community which boasts being one of the safest towns in the US. The south campus is located in the University Heights section of The City of Buffalo. Unlike Amherst, University Heights is an economically depressed urban environment. In recent years it has seen an increase in gang and drug activity as well as crimes against students who often make attractive targets for criminals. Each campus has its own unique identity as well as its own set of distinctly different issues of criminality.

In December of 2007, the university saw a rash of vehicle break-ins on the south campus. The crime prevention unit was tasked with developing a program to prevent/reduce the instances of vehicle break-ins utilizing the SARA Model of Problem solving (Scan, Analyze, Response, Assess). Since vehicle break-ins are largely preventable, we decided to focus on a combination of public education and target hardening. Several months earlier I had developed a Vehicle Break-In Report Card. This brochure would be part informational pamphlet and part report card which could be issued to a vehicle when a valuable item was observed in plain view. During the

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NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative

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distribution period each vehicle would receive either a passing or failing grade. This Vehicle Break-In Report Card also being utilized by police departments in Arlington & Carrollton, Texas would be the backbone of the program. The Report Card/Grade aspect tied in nicely with the educational mission of the institution and was picked up on by the local media. An analysis of the statistics showed that items being targeted are small electronic devices left in plain view. I-Pods, cell phones and especially GPS units seem to be the most popular targets of thieves. In all instances a window was smashed in order to gain entry. The locations are primarily parking lots on the periphery of the property most likely to allow the perpetrator an easy escape route. Most of the instances occurred M-F, 6:30 AM – 6:00 PM corresponding with the highest density of vehicles on campus. A large number of instances occurred in December, possibly corresponding to the approaching holidays.

Signage will play an important role in the initiative and the wording chosen will be the template for the additional public service announcements.

Large signs with attached brochure dispensers were placed at strategic locations of high visibility. A time frame of two weeks was decided upon to avoid

“warning fatigue”. The initiative would kick off on the first day of classes of the January 2008 semester. We gave the program a name: **NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative 2008 (Phase I)**. Once we had the name in place it was time to generate media interest. Because of the large educational component of the program media attention was critical. Our next step was to generate a press release to outline the initiative using power words such as aggressive, innovative, and unique. Enthusiasm and belief in your program creates interest and interest generates momentum.



Before the start date of the program, an article appeared in one of the University Newspapers: The Reporter titled “Would your car make the grade? University Police raising awareness of vulnerability to vehicle break-ins” by News Editor Sue Wuetcher.

Distribution of the Vehicle Break-In Report Cards would take place on Monday and Tuesday. This would allow us to

maximize coverage by targeting student with MWF & Tues/Thurs schedules. Utilizing road patrols and student police aides,

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PLEASE POST DATE: _____ THRU: _____

UNIVERSITY POLICE SAFETY ALERT!

The following message is a safety alert from the University Police: When parking your vehicle, make sure not to leave valuables in plain view. Secure items such as: GPS units, radar detectors, and pull-out radios in the trunk or out of sight. If possible, secure mounting hardware out of sight as this can be an indication to thieves that a device might be inside the vehicle. As always, please be vigilant for suspicious activity in and around the parking lots and report this activity to the University Police immediately, using any Blue Light Phone or by calling 645-2222.

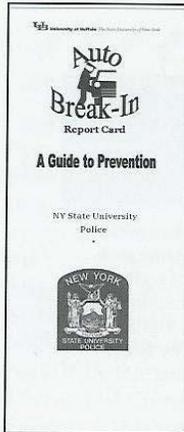
Let's work together for a safe community.

Report any crime on campus by dialing 645-2222, or 2222 from a campus phone. Dial 911 from off campus.

TOGETHER FOR A SAFE COMMUNITY

NYS University Police Vehicle Break-In Initiative

(Continued from Page 9)



approximately 2500 report cards were distributed at varying times during the two-day period. They were asked to record the parking hangtag number of those vehicles who received a failing grade. This

would be used at a later date to generate a data base of E-mail addresses. Community members with a failing grade would receive a follow-up E-mail explaining in further detail the initiative and the reason for the failing grade.

Other informational outlets were available to us including:

- UB-Alert 1620AM a radio channel which broadcasts a recorded message pertaining to parking and other timely information.
- The University Police maintained Daily Campus Road Condition Hotline.
- MY UB - the internet portal to the university.
- The University Police Web site (www.upolice.buffalo.edu).
- The scrolling marquis in front of the Student Union.
- The Residence Halls & Apartments Cable TV Information Channel.

We are declaring Phase I a success. Feedback from our

community has been very positive. Using the community policing model we have balanced the traditional reactive police response to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centering on the causes of crime and disorder. The information is empowering and has given the community an opportunity to be part of the problem solving process and at the same time forming a partnership with the police. They share in the credit for our success. We received some good media attention including two newspaper articles, one local TV station news story and a national recognition in The Campus Crime News Letter. Due to the increase of vehicle break-ins combined with the transient nature of a college community it was decided that the initiative should be an ongoing project with different reinforcing phases. Starting on 3/17/08 with the resumption of classes following the spring break we will begin Phase II of the initiative. We will keep our momentum going with a reinforcing blitz on the south campus and then we will be moving it north. We hope to distribute up to 8,000 Report Cards in total and will be exploring some new and creative ways to educate the public.

At The State University of New York at Buffalo we have had zero reported vehicle break-ins since the beginning of the year while surrounding jurisdictions continue to see an increase. *That is until the early morning hours of 3/6.*

At approximately 2:15 AM, patrols responded to a report of a vehicle break-in in progress at the

Hadley Village Apartment Complex on the north campus. Three white males were observed smashing the windows of two parked cars. They fled in a dark colored Jeep-like vehicle. Approximately 45 minutes later, Lt. Chris Bartolomei while on routine patrol observed a vehicle matching the earlier description traveling west on Chestnut Ridge Road in the Town of Amherst. Lt. Bartolomei pulled over the vehicle and subsequently arrested three suspects, recovering property from eight vehicle break-ins at the University and three in the Town of Amherst.

In the final analysis it's unrealistic to expect to eliminate crime altogether in a given area. Community policing concepts are not a panacea but a series of pixels in the emerging picture of effective/collaborative crime reduction. Used in conjunction with traditional reactive police methodologies our goal is to find a cure for the ailment instead of merely treating the symptoms. The initiative continues.

Wayne Colton is a 21 year veteran of The NYS University Police at SUNY Buffalo where he is currently a Community Liaison Officer. He is a CEPTED Specialist and has a BS in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College.
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