Opinion: Taking a different approach to tackling crime

By Brian Uhler

Community outreach: During the month of August, we concluded our Coffee with a Cop program. Members of the public expressed support for the program, but several asked for us to do the same thing at the Starbucks located at the Y to help give locals who frequent this location a chance to participate.

This said, our plan is to do another session for a month during the winter at the Y. When we have specific dates and times, we will forward this information.



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Crime: Last month we reported on a rise in property crime. Most jurisdictions in California are having a similar spike in property crime and many law enforcement leaders believe the combination of "realignment" and Proposition 47 is the cause of this increase. Both of these political events resulted in many property crime offenders being removed from the penitentiary and released to local jails or placed on probation. In the case of proposition 47, the immediate consequence of jail was replaced with many such offenders getting a citation.

Our response: This community issue is being addressed by the police in the following ways:

- In the coming months, you will be provided opportunities to learn about and obtain “anti-theft dots.” This program will help mark items which might be stolen with a special sticker and microscopic “dot” which police officers will be able to read in the field. The unique number associated with the dots will help us determine if property is stolen and return it to its rightful owner.
- The police department has acquired and will acquire additional GPS trackers. These trackers can be hidden on items which we leave in places where thefts may be occurring. Say for example we hide a tracker on an expensive bicycle which is left unattended somewhere. When the bike moves, it will trigger the GPS signal. Our dispatchers will immediately track the GPS signal and direct responding officers to the unknowing crook.

Message to thieves: The bike or other item you might be getting ready to steal could be a police “bait” operation – don’t steal.

Brian Uhler is chief of police in South Lake Tahoe.