

A Message about Crime and Citizen Engagement

Mayor Ken Koelsch

Our community is currently experiencing an increase in property related crimes. I know many of you are concerned about the thefts and burglaries that you are hearing about in the newspapers, on social media, or from friends and neighbors who have been impacted. We don't tend to think about Juneau, and our neighborhoods, as a place where this happens and hearing about it is concerning and upsetting.

I want to assure you that Juneau remains a safe place to live. Comparatively, our crime rate remains low and we are largely free of the violent crimes that plague bigger communities. In fact in the first 6 months of this year, violent crimes in Juneau decreased by 13% from last year at the same time.

However, property crimes went up by 20% over the same time period last year. While the current rate of property crimes is not out of line with prior years, this is obviously a concern and I want to let you know what CBJ is doing in response and what you can do as well to make sure your home and neighborhoods are safe.

Crime, and the prosecution of crime, is a complex topic. We believe that most of the property crime in our community is fueled by the drug epidemic the community is experiencing. CBJ is diligently working on solutions that will help address the root cause of this problem, but solving these types of issues takes time and the cooperation of many parts of the community.

In the short term, JPD is actively involved in the investigation and arrest of individuals involved in these crimes and CBJ is increasing staffing levels at JPD to help address the problem. In addition, JPD will be moving toward a neighborhood policing model. Neighborhoods will have specific officers assigned to them so that the officers can get to know neighborhood residents and issues. This should allow for tighter coordination between our officers and the community.

Regardless of how many officers CBJ employs, they can't be everywhere at all times. This is where the community can assist.

You can do your part to help reduce the level of property crime. Secure your vehicles, homes and businesses by locking your doors at night and when you are not home. Consider installing outside lights that are motion sensitive, or put up decorative lighting in your yards to illuminate darker areas. Let your friends and neighbors know if you are out of town so they can keep an eye on your house while you are gone, or contact JPD to register for vacation watch.

Pay attention to what you see happening in your neighborhood. Talk with your neighbors about what they are seeing. If you do see something suspicious, even if it is a small thing, contact JPD and report it. You can call the non-emergency line, 586-0600, or send an email to your neighborhood policing email address to report things that seems out of place or questionable. JPD tracks this information and will use it to help detect patterns of activity. There are five neighborhood email addresses:

Downtown@juneaupolice.com, DouglasIsland@juneaupolice.com, EastValley@juneaupolice.com, WestValley@juneaupolice.com and LemonCreek@juneaupolice.com

Form a neighborhood watch group and invite JPD to come talk with you about other strategies you can employ to help reduce the probability of crime in your neighborhood.

Juneau remains a safe place to live, work and raise our families. We have a community to be proud of. Be good neighbors and watch out for each other. Help our police to do their jobs by being extra sets of eyes and ears in the community.