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11 February 2008 Fontana Neighborhood Watch Meeting

The meeting was convened at 7 p.m. at the Fontana Clubhouse. In attendance were the Fontana Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, Jim McClain; Lynwood Bell, Aviano Way Block Captain, Kelly Beckett; Tom Belt, Tom and Patty Williams and our guest speaker, Diana Edwards, Albemarle County Community Relations Coordinator.

We now have a full roster of Block Captains who act as primary points of contact for information for the Neighborhood Watch (see the roster under the Menu item “Committees” at the Fontana Website). Diana stated the County currently has 8-10 officers on duty per shift to cover 760 square miles. During peak periods on the weekends and during holiday periods, it will likely take longer for officers to respond to calls.

In the past year the Fontana Neighborhood Watch had two main events, both held at the clubhouse: an annual meeting in February and Kid’s Summary Safety Seminar in June. We plan to have another Safety Seminar in late May and to participate in the National Night Out, a national-wide community neighborhood watch event, held in August. The goal in each of these is to raise awareness of the threat of crime and improve communication throughout our community.

Diana presented the statistics for Fontana for the period 1 January 2007 – 11 February 2008. These statistics were based only on those incidents reported and consisted of calls made for service and reports for service. Calls for Service involve non-criminal situations resulting in an officer responding in person to the person making the call, while Reports of Service involve situations of a criminal nature resulting in both an officer responding and the filing of an official police report.

There were 29 reports of service this year for Fontana, the same number as last year. Nineteen of these (65.5%) were due to home alarm malfunctions, exactly the same as last year. Eight events (27.6 %) were classified as neighborhood issues- i.e. situations affecting quality of life that could not be resolved by residents. These can include such things as noise complaints, vandalism, drunken driving and trespassing. Not included are so-called white-collar crimes such as identity theft and fraud. The majority of these incidents happened on Fontana Drive, Fontana Court and Via Florence.

We had one case of breaking and entering on Fontana Court. This occurred in August. Fortunately, the victims had very wisely inventoried and recorded serial numbers for their valuables, so were able to identify losses to the police. Diana is encouraging everyone to do the same with our valuables. This will aid us should we become victims, or in case of insurance claims. She provided home inventory recording sheets. The format is simple and can be easily replicated using the following table:

DESCRIPTION:	
MANUFACTURER:	
SERIAL NUMBER:	
MODEL NUMBER:	
OWNER APPLIED MARK:	
PURCHASED FROM:	
DATE PURCHASED:	
COST:	

Diana also left an electric engraving tool for us to use for the next 30 days. She recommends applying a coded marking to our valuables that would not be immediately recognizable and subject to defacing by thieves, avoiding serial numbers, initials and names. The engraver will be available for your use upon request.

Requesting a traffic safety study. Diana explained the process by which Fontana can request a traffic safety study leading to the possible addition of traffic calming measures. To do this we have to identify when and where traffic is heaviest or where vehicles tend to speed. We might be able to resolve some of the traffic concerns by requesting an officer be present at the time the problems generally occur. For those of

you concerned with this, I ask you to consider how you want to proceed and contact the police directly to arrange for support.

Diana noted the lack of exterior lighting throughout Fontana and suggested we consider installing street lights in particular areas. She offered to come back at a later date to conduct a detailed inspection of the problem. This is an issue the Association will have to follow up on later.

Diana also offered to conduct inspections of individual residences for criminal vulnerability. She has completed training in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and is qualified to advise us, however, she stressed this advice does not confer any liability on her part, should anyone receiving the service subsequently become a victim of residential crime. Anyone desiring this service should contact her directly at her office number: (434) 972-4079.

Respectfully yours,

Jim McClain

Fontana Neighborhood Watch Coordinator