

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Many of us will go through life without being a victim of a crime. For that reason we become complacent. If you have been a victim of a crime, it is likely that it was a property crime such as vandalism, burglary, or theft. The crime may not have added up to a huge monetary amount but the feeling of being victimized coupled with the inconvenience it caused is troublesome. We don't always lock our house doors, we leave our keys in the car, and we don't tell a neighbor or friends we are gone for the weekend or ask them to keep an eye on our property.

Property crimes are difficult for us to solve as often there is no evidence. Stolen property is difficult to recover as most people do not have a record of the property they own. Do you have an inventory of everything you own? Do you record make, model, serial number, date and place of purchase, and value? Have you taken photographs of your valuables? Do you have ample insurance and the necessary riders to ensure coverage from theft or fire?

I have always prided myself on having such an inventory. I kept a list in a safe place and had the original on the computer. Recently my old "personal property" program crashed and I was unable to recover the itemized list. Upset, yet understanding the importance of such an inventory I quickly ran to the local computer store and purchased the latest and greatest in personal property inventory software (\$29.95). I was impressed with the added features over my old software and went to work immediately. Easy to use, I quickly entered numerous fields of data and attached a digital photo to each item. It allows cataloguing by room and the ability to move items from room to room should you reorganize the home. I worked on and off for a few days, probably eight hours total until I completed the task. What a relief and what a nice list for my insurance company.

I urge all of you to compile your list, either by pencil and paper or the basic software. We need significant data before we can enter stolen property into the crime system for recovery. Often the minimum data required is make, model, and serial number. Other identifying info is important, a photo is great. If we can not enter the stolen items the reality is it will likely never be recovered.

Power tools, guns, and electronics all have the necessary information needed to enter them into the system. Jewelry poses a whole different issue. You need recent appraisals to determine value as well as a photo. Most people are amazed when they add up the value of their personal property. This does not include emotional value of things that can never be replaced such as photographs, special gifts, and collectables. Whether its wildlife prints, Hummel figurines, your Brett Favre print or other sports memorabilia, these things are valuable and many priceless.

Too often we underestimate our risk of being a victim of a theft or burglary. Our hope is that you are never a victim, but that is not very realistic. Should you be the victim, we really want to help. Our goals are to locate and arrest the perpetrator and recover your property. You can assist us in this cause by securing your valuables, maintaining a list of them as well as recording the necessary information on each item so it can be entered into the computer system for nationwide dissemination. Personal markings on your property are also of great assistance. I also encourage each of you to review your insurance coverage's to ensure you are protected. Thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.