Crime prevention starts with being proactive.  Do not wait for crime to show up on your doorstep before taking safety precautions on Griffin Ranch. Preventing and addressing crime/suspicious activity takes effort from individuals, the Griffin Ranch community working in conjunction with every property owner and local government officials (law enforcement, fire department, emergency medical services, building department, politicians, etc.). Some people have the mindset that they do not want **“The Government”** involved in their affairs.  That train of thought is unrealistic and does not work to keep America safe.  There will always be laws, rules, policies, and procedures to follow.  It should be the goal of individuals in our society to police themselves and/or voluntarily comply with the laws in place. That will always be a work in progress.

**Tips to reduce and detect crime or suspicious activity**

**Hardening the target at your property/residence**

* **Lock your doors and windows** especially the locations which are easily accessible from outside of your residence.
* **Control access to your property.**  Consider installing an interior gate if feasible, near the driveway to your residence. This could deter any unwanted individuals from driving up to your residence.  **Do not get a false sense of security because you live in a mountain community and have a coded community electric entrance/exit gate.** You could still become a victim. More people are moving into the area and unfortunately some individuals might bring their criminal behavior with them.
* **Avoid giving out the gate code.** Whenever possible or if feasible, have the individual call you to gain access to the ranch.
* **Be cautious about posting information and pictures of you and your family on vacation via social media platforms.**  This could target your home to be burglarized while you are gone.  Post your vacation photos online after you return home.
* **Security system with cameras and a monitoring company** will provide an additional layer of protection. When there is a crime in progress, law enforcement response will be slow to this community.  However, video camera footage can help identify the suspect(s) and vehicle(s) involved in the crime and is a great investigative tool.  ***The Fremont County Sheriff might be planning to have a substation staffed with two fulltime deputies in our area.  If this occurs, law enforcement response time will be faster, and we will have a point of contact and a working relationship with community deputies.***
* **Monitor unoccupied homes.** Some of our community members on Griffin Ranch do not reside here full time. It is important for those of us living here fulltime to monitor those homes for suspicious activity. There are squatters that target unoccupied homes which sometimes get vandalized. Notify law enforcement and your parttime neighbors if you see something that does not look right at their residence/property.

**Target removal of items that could be easily stolen**

* **Place your tractors, other farm equipment, tools, construction materials, etc. in a secure area when not in use.**  This also applies to contractors doing work on your property.  Do not assume that no one will steal your equipment. Opportunity thieves will steal anything that is unsecured.  Secure your vehicle in the garage if possible.  When your vehicle is outside of a secure structure, lock the doors and take the keys.  During my career in law enforcement in Los Angeles, I arrested many suspects driving out of state stolen vehicle taken from communities like this one.  When people leave their vehicles unlocked with the keys inside, that an easy target for a car thief.
* **Motion sensor lights** around your house, barn, shop, etc. could act as a deterrent to unwanted individuals.
* **Timed light switches** or the ability to control home lighting remotely can make it appear that your home is occupied while you are away.

  **Keep up with crime trends and other relevant incidents in the area**

* **Knowing about crime and other suspicious activity on Griffin Ranch and the surrounding area** is a **“Red Flag”** for potential emerging trends. No matter how minor or insignificant the incident might be, Griffin Ranch community members **must** share information with each other as well as law enforcement. **Communication** and **transparency** are the key. Fremont County Sheriff Office is a great resource for crime trends. I recently talked to a Sergeant from the Fremont County Sheriff Office and he discussed an uptick in illegal commercialized marijuana grows in the area. He provided information on how to identify equipment used in an illegal commercial grow operation.

**What to do when you observe a crime or suspicious activity**

* **Be a good witness**. If you see something that does not seem right, be curious and monitor the situation from a safe location. It is wise not to confront individuals involved in suspicious activity. That could produce deadly consequences. Because we live in an open carry state and many individuals have concealed carry permits, there is a high probability the suspicious individual will be armed with a firearm. Do not hesitate to contact Fremont County Sheriff Office for advice if you see a suspicious person. Do not feel that you are bothering local law enforcement. That is their job to investigate suspicious activity or a crime that has occurred. Be prepared to provide the following information to the law enforcement dispatcher when you make the call:

 **\*Your name, your description, firearm in your possession?**

 **\*Your phone number**

 **\*Location of the incident**

 **\*Crime or suspicious activity you observed. Why the activity is**

 **suspicious to you**

 **\*Suspect description (gender, race, age, height, weight, tattoos or**

 **some other oddities, clothing description)**

 **\*Weapons used or in possession by the suspect**

 **\*Vehicle description and if the suspect leaves the scene,**

 **direction of travel (law enforcement will be looking for the**

 **suspect as they are responding to the scene)**

 \***Victim(s) at the scene, description of injuries, is the victim**

 **conscious and breathing (Emergency Medical Service might**

 **be dispatched to the scene)**

Crime prevention and identifying and reporting suspicious activity is the responsibly of every property owner on Griffin Ranch. If the activity is left unchecked, it will give the impression that it is acceptable to allow the crime/suspicious behavior to occur. The results are more serious crime. We must communicate with each other because we all have a vested interest in keeping our ranch safe. Be a good witness and not a dead hero. The above information is not being provided to you to make you feel paranoid. It is just a guide to help keep you and others safe. Feel free to use the tips that will apply to your individual situation. The above information is very basic, but feel free to contact me if you have additional questions.

Bernard Fitchpatrick

bcfitchp@aol.com

661-313-008