

Bethalto Police seeking public assistance on string of vehicle burglaries

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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BETHALTO - The Bethalto Police Department is investigating a recent string of vehicle burglaries, which took place in the early morning hours of Tuesday.

Bethalto Police Deputy Chief Craig Welch said the suspects struck the Patriots' Crossing subdivision on the east side of the village. Welch said three suspects were actually confronted by a homeowner around 4 a.m. Tuesday who verbally warned three suspects, and even gave subsequent chase. Welch said the suspects were two males and a female, all wearing either white hoodies or white jackets. One of the male suspects was

reportedly black, and Welch said the conditions at that time of morning were too dark for the witness to identify any other characteristics of that male or the two other suspects.

Welch said more than \$60 worth of valuables and loose change were stolen specifically from unlocked cars, saying locked vehicles were not targeted. Among the stolen items were clothing, electronics, a Yeti cup and some jewelry. Welch said a laptop in one vehicle was left alone as well.

At least six vehicles were targeted Tuesday morning, Welch said, but said many cars had signs of rummaging and added locked cars were probably tested and left alone. In fact, the simple act of locking one's car may prevent incidences like these, Welch said.

"It's been more than three years since someone broke a window to commit a vehicle burglary," Welch said.

Similar burglaries were also reported recently from Rosewood Heights, where home security footage captured a tall white male in a checker-patterned jacket rummaging through vehicles. That case is being investigated by the Madison County Sheriff's Office, which confirmed it is currently following leads. Welch said he has no information at this time connecting the two incidences.

Like the Rosewood Heights burglaries, Welch said home surveillance footage does exist of Tuesday morning's crimes, but said most of the videos are not of good quality. The Bethalto Police Department is asking anyone who lives in the area of the most recent string of vehicle burglaries who have home surveillance systems to review footage, even if their vehicles were not burglarized, and give any suspicious video to the Bethalto Police.

This is not the first string of such crimes in Bethalto in recent times, either, Welch said. A similar rash of unlocked vehicles being burglarized occurred over the summer of 2017, and resulted in three arrests with two individuals in prison, Welch said.

When asked why these crimes are becoming so common, Welch said he attributes it at least in part to the growing opioid epidemic.