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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PREVENTING VEHICLE BREAK-INS

WAKE FOREST, NC – May 19, 2008 – Following a string of recent break-ins involving unlocked vehicles in the Margot's Pond and Smith's Creek subdivisions, the [Wake Forest Police Department](#) is again urging residents to lock their unoccupied vehicles when parked at home or away.

Most vehicle break-ins are carried out by amateurs who take advantage of the carelessness of drivers who leave their vehicles unlocked and valuables in plain sight. By simply locking your doors, you can significantly reduce your chances of becoming a victim.

Police say high-end electronics and global positioning system (GPS) units are growing in popularity with car thieves, so drivers should always remove or hide their cell phones, iPods, and GPS units.

Car prowlers tend to hit areas with high concentrations of cars, such as apartment or townhouse parking lots, shopping malls and garages. A visible GPS unit is an obvious target, but car prowlers also look for any signs one might be hidden inside the vehicle, such as a mount on the window or dashboard. Even the circle left on the windshield from a suction cup mount is enough to entice some crooks to break in. They assume a GPS unit is hidden somewhere inside.

"People need to realize if they leave the GPS mounting station in their vehicle or even the suction cup marks on the windshield, that's sending a clear sign to thieves about what is likely inside the vehicle," said Lt. T. Coleman.

The police department is offering the following tips to help prevent vehicle break-ins:

- Park in open, well-lighted, and populated areas near your destination. Avoid parking near trucks, vans, dumpsters, and other objects that obstruct visibility and provide hiding places.
- Avoid parking near strangers loitering or sitting in vehicles.
- Park in lots or garages where you don't have to leave your keys.
- If you have a garage – use it! Then lock the vehicle AND the garage.

- If possible, don't leave your vehicle on the street, in an alley, or on your driveway. If you have to park on a street, avoid dark or isolated areas.
- Turn off your engine, roll up all windows, lock all doors, and take your keys with you even if you are making a quick stop at a store or gas station, or even in your driveway.
- Don't leave spare keys inside your vehicle. An experienced thief knows all the hiding places. Store spare keys in your wallet.
- Don't leave cell phones, GPS units, iPods, wallets, purses, or anything of value in vehicles. If you prefer not to take such items with you, lock them in your trunk!
- Don't leave your vehicle in an unattended public lot for an extended period of time.
- Install an alarm system that will sound when someone attempts to break in, move, tilt, or start your vehicle. Always activate the system when leaving the vehicle.
- Check your vehicle if you hear the alarm sound, but don't try to stop a person attempting to break in. Get a good description of the person and call the police.

When shopping for a new vehicle, look for some key features, including:

- Interior hood and trunk lock releases. Install a secondary hood lock if your car does not have one.
- A factory immobilizer – a computer chip in the key.
- A locking steering wheel.
- Other anti-theft devices, such as an alarm or GPS tracking system.

The Wake Forest Police Department encourages citizens to report suspicious behavior or activity by calling (919) 556-9111.

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For more information on the [Town of Wake Forest](#), contact [Bill Crabtree](#), Public Information Officer, at (919) 554-6196.