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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POLICE URGE RESIDENTS TO ALWAYS LOCK CAR DOORS

WAKE FOREST, NC – June 21, 2011 – As the weather turns warmer, the number of vehicle break-ins is again on the increase in our area. In recent days, vandals have struck several unlocked cars in Wake Forest. As a result, the police department is again urging residents to lock their unoccupied vehicles at all times.

Electronics equipment, purses, and wallets are among the most popular items stolen, along with portable GPS units and compact discs. Unfortunately, most of the break-ins in our area involve vehicles that were unlocked or show no sign of forced entry. Additionally, although thieves sometimes target parking lots, they do most of their damage on residential streets and driveways - again targeting unlocked cars, trucks, and SUVs.

That's why it's so important for residents to do everything possible to remove - or at least lessen - the temptations for would-be thieves.

According police, securing your vehicle and removing valuable items is the best way to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of a vehicle break-in. If an item can't be removed, then its best to make sure it is out of sight to potential crooks looking for an easy target.

Another thing you can do is call the police department if you think something is suspicious. If you call and it turns out to be nothing, then that's ok. But it could turn out to be something after all. So when in doubt, make the call.

Here are a few additional tips suggested by the Wake Forest Police Department:

- 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, 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.
- If something looks suspicious, then it probably is. 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.

Again, 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 about the Town of Wake Forest, contact Public Information Officer Bill Crabtree at (919) 435-9421 or bcrabtree@wakeforestnc.gov.