

Summer Travelers Can Take Advantage of BSO's Free Home Watch Program

BY STACEY BOMSER

Summer is one of the busiest travel seasons. Whether you are planning an amazing summer vacation or simply going away for a few days to drop off a child at sleepaway camp or at college for the summer session, make sure your home is protected.

Weston residents can rest easier while they are away knowing their home is under the careful watch of the Broward Sheriff's Office. By simply signing up for the free Home Watch program, a BSO deputy, community service aid, or C.O.P. (Citizen Observer Patrol) volunteer will drive by your house and perform a daily perimeter check for signs of break-in or suspicious activity.

To register for this free service, simply download the Home Watch form from the BSO website (www.sheriff.org/homewatch) or pick one up at the Weston Police Services Building located at 17300 Royal Palm Boulevard. That is where completed forms should be submitted. Homeowners must provide the dates and times the home will be unoccupied, along with a contact phone number of a trusted neighbor or local relative.

In addition to registering for the Home Watch program, homeowners can further protect their property while they are away by taking a few precautions. The Broward Sheriff's Office recommends you:

- ▶ let a trusted neighbor know when you will

be out of town, and leave a spare key and an emergency telephone number where they can reach you;

- ▶ make your home appear occupied by attaching timers to the lights and television sets and set them to turn on and off at different times;
- ▶ open some of the drapes or blinds; during daytime hours this gives the appearance that someone is home, and during the evening, lights inside the house are more visible;
- ▶ have your newspaper and mail held, or picked up by a friend or neighbor;
- ▶ invite a neighbor to park their car in your driveway;
- ▶ lock your garage door and disconnect the automatic opener;
- ▶ don't forget to set your alarm;
- ▶ never leave a message on your telephone answering machine or on social media stating you are out of town.

Wherever your travels may take you, be sure to bring along a copy of *Our City Weston*. If you submit a picture of you, or your family, holding the magazine at your destination, then you could be the winner of our Photo of the Month. Each month one lucky traveler wins a gift certificate to a local restaurant and gets their vacation picture published.



BSO's Home Watch program offers added security while you are away.