

Wave of Break-ins hits Ellenton

By Melissa Donley
Staff Writer

In the early morning hours of Oct. 1, several Ellenton residents fell victim to an unknown thief who lurked in the darkness.

That morning, the unknown suspect broke into the vehicles of 16 residents of Coral Creek Court, New Paris Way and Duck Creek Way as the vehicles were parked in the residences' driveways. Several residents had several cars entered by the suspect.

Most of the residents reported to the Manatee County Sheriff's Office that they were last in their cars after 5 p.m. Sept. 30 only to return to them the following morning after 5:30 a.m. to find gloveboxes and counsels ransacked and items missing.

Manatee County Sheriff's spokesperson Dave Bristow said there are currently no leads on suspects in the burglaries from vehicles. He said burglaries from vehicles are difficult crimes to solve.

"It is one of the hardest crimes to solve because usually you don't have any witnesses or evidence," Bristow said.

Bristow said these types of crimes typically happen in large numbers at once.

"Usually when those crimes happen, there's not just one or two," Bristow said. "There's multiple."

All of the vehicles involved in the burglaries were unlocked, according to reports. Bristow said there are several things a car owner can do to prevent these types of crimes from occurring.

"They look for an easy target," Bristow said. "A lot of times they don't have to

Watch Out!

There are several steps you can take to prevent becoming a victim of a vehicle burglary.

Remove visible items from your vehicle. If you leave items visible in your car, you are a target. Be aware that someone may know your trick of hiding your wallet, purse or cell phone under your seat, especially at a gym. Take these things with you or lock these items in your trunk or glove box.

Lock up. Remember to lock your vehicle and take your keys, even for quick errands. Close all windows, including vent or wing windows and sunroofs, so criminals aren't able to reach into the vehicle. Also make sure the trunk, hatchback or tailgate are locked to block access into the car.

Park safely. At home, park in your garage if you have one. Lock your car and all garage doors. Or, park in a well-lit area.

work hard. If its unlocked its easy prey. Its good to lock your car all the time."

Car owners can also keep valuables and other items out of plain sight. Bristow

said criminals are often looking for loose change and other items, such as CDs and purses. When left on car seats and in plain sight, these items draw attention.

Adopt-a-City Program Helps Hurricane Victims



Several businesses and restaurants sponsored the fundraiser and provided people with free food and bracelets in exchange for a \$10 donation to benefit the residents of Waveland.



A raffle took place at the fundraiser held past Sunday to benefit residents in Waveland. "Balloons, Tunes and BBQ" raised over \$5,000.

By Christine Koester
Staff Writer

More than 50 Florida cities have expressed willingness to help hurricane-damaged cities in Mississippi through Adopt-a-City program.

"We are getting calls for cities on a daily basis," said Sharon Berrian, Florida League of Cities spokeswoman. "Thirty cities have sent forms back, but we have had at least 50 inquires or more." Berrian said they are still in the formative stage in putting the program together that is designed to establish a sister relationship between Florida and Mississippi cities.

Bradenton was one of the first to participate when it adopted Ocean Spring, a coastal Mississippi city. Palmetto decided to follow in Bradenton's footsteps and became sister cities with Waveland, Miss on Sept. 27.

A fundraiser was held last Sunday to benefit residents in Waveland. Corvus International Freedom Bank, Manatee Fruit Co., Nelco Cos. and Taylor & Fulton were among the sponsors of the fundraiser called "Balloons, Tunes and BBQ."

According to Susan Anderson, assistant at Community Redevelopment Agency, they raised over \$5,000. Nelco is going to

match it dollar for dollar, which brings the total to over \$10,000 so far. In addition, a city employee won a generator at the fundraiser and donated it to Waveland.

"Waveland is still getting on their feet with the city working out of a trailer," Anderson said. "It is an ongoing effort. Everyday the need changes, and we are just making sure we have the money first and then see what the needs are."

Anderson said she appreciated the great turnout at the event, and she would like to thank all the citizens in Manatee. "We will be sister-cities forever," she said. "If something similar happens to Palmetto

we know they will be there for us."

Executive Director of the CRA Tanya Lukowiak said they decided to adopt Waveland because they are similar in size to Palmetto. "We were interested in helping smaller cities that are waiting for masses of relief to get to them," Lukowiak said. The bigger cities will get relief first, she said. In addition, Lukowiak said that they wanted a personal relationship, which is easier to achieve with a small city where you can remember names and faces. "A personal relationship keeps us motivated," she said. "It is better than just dropping a dollar in a box."

Manatee Refuses Tallevast Community

The proposed agreement from the Tallevast Community would assure that the County wouldn't get sued if it agreed to waive the statute of limitations.

By Christine Koester
Staff Writer

More than 250 Tallevast residents have filed a suit against Lockheed Martin Corp. for damages and emotional stress associated with the contamination from the former beryllium plant. Tallevast has been suffering from an underground contamination since it was discovered in 2000.

The plaintiffs charge that Lockheed knew that the plant was polluting the community. Lockheed became aware of the contamination when it purchased the plant located on Tallevast Road from former owner Loral Corporation.

Manatee County officials and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection were notified. Lockheed has not seen a copy of the suit yet. The company's spokeswoman, Meredith Rouse Davis, said she couldn't give a comment on something she hasn't seen. "We followed the Florida state protocol and notified FDEP," she said. Lockheed is conducting an environmental investigation. So far, contamination has been found in ground water and soil.

Other defendants include Loral Corporation, Wire Pro Inc., BECSO LLC and WPI Sarasota Division Inc., who

bought the property from Lockheed. The Manatee Board of County Commissioners decided not to enter an agreement with the Tallevast Community. The proposed agreement from the Tallevast Community would assure that the County wouldn't get sued if it agreed to waive the statute of limitations.

Dr. Robert Demott of ENVIRON International Corp. is responsible for performing a health risk analysis of Tallevast community, and he spent several hours with residents and former workers Sept. 19 to get first-hand information about their experience. The risk analysis includes finding out what chemicals are present at what level and how people were exposed. "Meeting with the residents was an unique opportunity to get first-hand information instead of relying on hypothetical assump-

tions," Demott said. The purpose of the meeting was to get information about usage of the land over the years and the different activities that went on at certain areas, said Demott. Demott is waiting for test results from Family Oriented Community and Strong and the State Department of Health. Test results from FOCUS should be ready in two to three weeks while the test results from the state will be completed sometime this week. Lockheed has already provided test results. Demott expects to see a "range of different levels for chlorinated sulfas in ground water and a range of metals and other constituents in soil." He will be finished with his final analysis in six to eight weeks. So far, the test results from Lockheed have identified a primary source of contamination.