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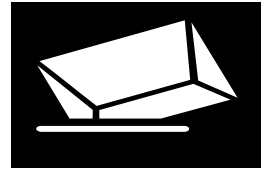
Winter 2008



# The Crime Stopper Newsletter

CRIME STOPPERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, INC.

## A Letter From The President



Dear Crime Stopper Supporters:

Another successful year has passed for Crime Stoppers and the citizens of Pinellas County. We once again enjoyed a tremendous turnout for our 7th Annual Crime Stoppers Classic Golf Tournament at Wentworth Golf Club. The proceeds from the tournament help enhance our ability to continue operating. We recruited several new members to our Board of Directors from the local business community. We received several successful tips through our Campus Crime Stoppers program and a tip received to our 24 hour Tip Line was instrumental in a multimillion dollar drug seizure. Without the active participation of the community, Crime Stoppers of Pinellas County could not have had these successes.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Crime Stoppers of Pinellas would like to thank the citizens, businesses, media and the law enforcement agencies for their participation, partnership and support this past year. We look forward to our continued success in the upcoming year.

The Board of Directors of Crime Stoppers of Pinellas County wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season and prosperous new year!

Bill McCann, President

## Text A Tip From Your Cell Phone

In July, Crime Stoppers of Pinellas County, Inc. began accepting anonymous text tips via a cellular phone. As a result, Crime Stoppers now offers 3 ways for tipsters to provide anonymous information: the 24-hour telephone Tip Line at 1-800-873-TIPS (8477), online at [www.crimestoppersofpinellas.org](http://www.crimestoppersofpinellas.org) and now text messaging.

The process for submitting a text tip to Pinellas Crime Stoppers is simple. From a cellular phone text keyword **TIP144** plus the tip information to CR I M E S (274637). Once the tipster hits send they will receive a response text containing a unique code number which they will be responsible for remembering for future contact.

According to Anderson Software's website, creator of the text tip computer program:

"Today the vast majority of mobile phones offer a feature called Short Message Service (SMS) to send and receive short text messages. TipSoft SMS is an application which allows tipsters to anonymously submit information to participating Crime Stoppers Program. This secure application allows the tipster and the Crime Stoppers Coordinator to have two-way dialog while keeping the tipster's identity completely anonymous. The popularity of text messaging, especially among younger generations, has created a significant opportunity for Crime Stoppers. SMS offers two-way communication and the ability to reach an audience through the mobile phone they carry with them every day. People provide anonymous information to Crime Stoppers programs to help police solve crimes. They do so knowing that their identity will never be revealed because the Crime Stoppers program does not know who they are.

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# 7th Annual Crime Stoppers Classic Golf Tournament



Sheriff Jim Coats welcomes the golfers.



First Place Team: Juice Ahern, Mike Murphy, Leslie Knowles (Tournament Chair), Ed Hooper, Brian Aungst.



Frank Robertson, WTVT FOX 13 and Board Member Greg Tita.



John Timberlake, Clearwater Threshers and Board Member Eva Eraclides Timberlake.

Crime Stoppers of Pinellas County, Inc. held the 7th Annual Crime Stoppers Classic Golf Tournament on October 9, 2008 at the Wentworth Golf Club in Tarpon Springs. Frank Robertson, WTVT FOX 13 Anchor and longtime supporter of Crime Stoppers served as Emcee again this year.

Sheriff Coats welcomed the players to a great day of golfing for a good cause. Golfers were provided a boxed lunch and dinner. Trophies were awarded to the top 3 teams, closest to the pin and longest drive—male and female. The Golf Tournament is the primary fundraiser for Crime Stoppers of Pinellas and was a tremendous success again this year.

Crime Stoppers would like to thank our sponsors: Bright House Networks, Quaker Steak & Lube, Clearwater Threshers, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Pieczonka Trophy of Florida and WingHouse.

Shopping for gifts, wrapping packages, traveling and parties... we all look forward to the holidays. It's one of the busiest shopping times of the year. And sadly, it can be the best time for criminals to target victims. Criminals realize that the spirit of the holiday season often distracts people making them prime targets for burglars, muggers and pickpockets. Crooks know the holidays are an opportune time to commit their crimes.

Throughout my career as a Deputy Sheriff, safety tips during the holiday season have remained constant with a few exceptions. Celebrate safely this season by following these tips at home, while shopping and when you're out for the evening.

## **Secure your home:**

- To deter burglars who might be tempted by a Christmas tree decorated with glittering gifts, make sure wrapped decorated packages are not in full view of a window. Use empty boxes wrapped in pretty paper for decoration, and store valuable items safely in a deadbolt-locked closet or room.
- When you're away, use an automatic timer for your lights.
- If traveling for an extended period of time, ask a neighbor to watch over your home.
- Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone.
- If you're going out for the evening, turn on lights and a radio or television so it looks like someone is home.
- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows, even if it's just for a quick trip to the convenience store.

## **Shop Safely:**

- Stay alert and be aware of people and activity around you.
- Park in a well-lit space and be sure to lock the car, close the windows and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible. Always be sure to guard your pin number.
- Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets—carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Place your wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- If you're shopping with kids, teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

## **Beware of strangers at your door:**

- Since criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts, ask for identification. If there's any question, get a phone number to call for verification before opening the door.
- Don't be taken by con artists collecting for bogus charities. Ask how the funds will be used. If you aren't satisfied with the answers, don't give. Check with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services at 1-800-HELP-FLA, your local Better Business Bureau or Law Enforcement agency to see if there have been any complaints regarding the charity.

While the holiday season is a wonderful time to be with family and friends, please celebrate responsibly and keep these safety tips for you and your loved ones in mind.

*Greg Tita retired as a Lieutenant with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office where he worked many years as a Public Information Officer. He currently sits on the Board of Directors for Crime Stoppers of Pinellas County, Inc.*



Name  
Address  
Address  
Address

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**"We're Fighting Crime  
One Call At A Time!"**

Crime Stoppers of Pinellas is a 501(c)3  
non-profit, charitable organization

We're on the web  
Visit us at:  
[www.crimestoppersofpinellas.org](http://www.crimestoppersofpinellas.org)

**More Information/Upcoming Events/Announcements**

- Support us by using GoodSearch.com (powered by Yahoo!) as your internet search engine and designate Crime Stoppers of Pinellas as the charity in the drop down box. The Pinellas Program will receive a penny for each search you do.

Report tips online at [www.crimestoppersofpinellas.org](http://www.crimestoppersofpinellas.org) OR from your cell phone, text keyword TIP144 plus your info to CRIMES (274637).

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Wachovia Bank

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Randy Fierbaugh, NISCAYAH

**Text A Tip From Your Cell Phone (cont.)**

As Crime Stoppers programs embrace new technology, it is essential that these strong anonymity protections remain in place. In developing the TipSoft SMS system for Crime Stoppers, Anderson Software, LLC worked closely with Eric Jacksch, a leading Canadian information security expert, to build a system capable of two-way SMS communication without revealing the mobile phone number to Crime Stoppers. To accomplish this, the system uses a double alias approach:

1. SMS messages from mobile phones are sent to a secure server located in Canada that is independently operated by Mr. Jacksch's company, where the mobile phone number is encrypted and assigned an alias.
2. The text message and alias are immediately forwarded to Anderson Software's server in the United States. The Canadian server retains only the minimum information required to facilitate replies. The text message itself is not retained.
3. Anderson Software's server assigns a second alias and then inserts the message, along with the second alias, into the TipSoft system where it becomes available to the appropriate Crime Stoppers program.
4. The Crime Stoppers program receives only the content of the text message and the second alias (Tipster ID) assigned by Anderson Software.
5. Replies from the Crime Stoppers program follow the same process in reverse. The reply is sent to the Anderson Software server, which substitutes the first alias for the second alias, sends the message to the Canadian server, which decrypts the original phone number, substitutes it for the alias, and forwards the message to the mobile telephone SMS network." For more information go to [www.smscrimetips.com](http://www.smscrimetips.com).

Remember... to send a tip to the Pinellas Crime Stoppers program, use keyword **TIP144** at the beginning of your text message.