



JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO

SHERIFF

200 JEFFERSON COUNTY PARKWAY • GOLDEN, CO 80401 • (303) 277-0211

Graffiti: What it Means, What to Do

by Sheriff Ted Mink

Graffiti has existed since the beginning of time in one form or another, from hieroglyphics to petroglyphs to rock outcroppings along the Oregon Trail. However, today's brand of spray-painted self-expression is viewed less as art and more as an eyesore to motorists and property owners who must view it, or worse — remove it.

Tagging

In the second half of the 20th century, urban gangs began using graffiti as a territorial marker. This practice, known as "tagging," continues today, but is now practiced by people unaffiliated with gang activity as well.

A "tagger" will usually use spray-paint to put his design in a public place; the design will be proprietary to the tagger and may be initials, an illustration, or a combination of numbers and letters, like a vanity license plate. Most tags represent the tagger's nickname, and tend to be short so as to make them easier to accomplish without being caught. Most taggers want to see their mark in as many places as possible, as prominently as possible.

Individual taggers or "tagging crews" of friends account for most of the bold and colorful graffiti you may see. They put their names and designs up to show other taggers their artwork. Young males between 13 and 25 create most of the graffiti that's out there. This activity can indicate the beginning stages of gang involvement, but is often not connected. In one recent incident, the Sheriff's Office caught a tagging crew spray-painting an underpass; they were carrying digital cameras to take pictures of their work.

Gang-related Tagging

A tag created by a gang member features the name of his gang. Tag wars occur when members of another gang see it, and use another color to cross it out and leave their own tag. Gangs undergo this process to claim their turf. The more artistic the image, the more likely it's the work of a tagger crew and not a gang. Gangs don't bother as much with art; they are concerned only about making their presence known.

The Sheriff's Office and Graffiti in Jefferson County

About 70 percent of graffiti in Jeffco is straightforward tagging that is not gang related. The Sheriff's Office views graffiti as a crime, as well as a quality-of-life issue for residents. In addition to making arrests for criminal mischief when possible, the Sheriff's Office documents graffiti in an attempt to identify taggers.

In a new effort to clean up problem graffiti on county property, the Sheriff's Office will be deploying a crew of inmate workers to paint over, power wash or scrub graffiti in some areas. While we cannot employ this tactic on private property, we do hope to make an impact on the prominent markings on county roads and signage.

What You Can Do

Report new graffiti to the Sheriff's Office as soon as you see it by calling our non-emergency number: 303-277-0211. The Sheriff's Office will send a crime scene technician to photograph the graffiti so that we can try to identify the tagger, as well as analyzing it to determine if it's an indication of gang activity. If the markings are on county roadways or signage, we will determine whether our inmate worker crew can remove them.

A property owner is responsible for graffiti on his or her own property. If your property or business is affected by tagging, your best course is to paint over the markings as soon as possible (after contacting the Sheriff's Office to document the incident), to discourage tag wars on your property and the surrounding area.



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Jeffco's Unsolved Mysteries

by Sheriff Ted Mink

In 2005, two investigators formed the Sheriff's Office Cold Case Unit. This two-person team is the first of its kind in Jefferson County, and investigators Cheryl Moore and Jack McFadden have already made strides on a few of the 41 cases dating back to the 1950s. Today, these investigators would like to ask for your help in solving some of Jefferson County's most puzzling homicides.

Arrest in 1989 Murder Case

This June, investigators made an arrest in the murder of Lanell Williams. In 1989, two college students found the body of Lanell Williams near Golden. Williams was last seen alive on Thursday, October 12, 1989 around 6 p.m., when she got some milk, dropped it off at her mother's home and left again. Lanell Williams was known to be a drug user.

In 1989 investigators had attempted to analyze DNA evidence from the scene. However, technology at the time was not advanced enough to yield any results. Another attempt in 2005 by the Sheriff's Office DNA specialist, using new technology, resulted in a DNA profile. The DNA profile led investigators to identify Billy Edwin Reid as their suspect.

On June 2, 2006, Billy Edwin Reid (DOB: 4/9/59), was charged with first degree murder. He was in the Denver County Jail at the time on unrelated charges. Investigators are seeking more information on this case. If you think you may know anything about the murder of Lanell Williams, or the activities of Billy Edwin Reid around that time, please contact Investigator Cheryl Moore at (303) 271-5625, or cmoore@jeffco.us.

Jane Doe Identified

In another big breakthrough, last year a fingerprint analyst used a 16-year-old print to identify the victim from a 1989 murder case as Lisa Kay Kelly. Hikers had discovered Kelly's body on Lookout Mountain in March 1989. She was later laid to rest in a local cemetery with a headstone reading, "Jane Doe 1989, Known Only to God." Her identity remained a mystery until 2005, when the Cold Case team took a new look at the case. Using new fingerprint databases to make the positive identification, investigators provided Kelly's family answers about their long-missing relative.

With a renewed vigor, the Cold Case team is delving into the Kelly homicide. If you have any information that may help solve the murder of Lisa Kay Kelly, please contact Investigator Cheryl Moore at (303) 271-5625, or cmoore@jeffco.us.

James William Murray

On May 15, 1988 residents of a Deer Creek Canyon home experienced problems with their toilet. After trying other remedies they opened the septic tank and inside discovered a body. With the help of Aspen Septic Service and the Jefferson County Coroner's Office the tank was drained and the body and evidence removed. The body was identified as that of James William Murray, known to locals as "Crazy Jim."

Family and friends had not seen Murray since December 1985, as he prepared for a trip to Arizona. Murray lived in a cabin behind Long Brothers Garage off Highway 285 near Conifer for a number of years. He also rented a house off of Grapevine Road for a while. He was last known to have a beige Volkswagen Rabbit. Investigation revealed that Murray had both used and sold cocaine.

After the story of Murray's death became public, many Jefferson County residents came forward with information. Today, the Cold Case team is seeking any information that may shed light on this case, whether or not it was provided during the initial investigation. Please contact Investigator Cheryl Moore at (303) 271-5625, or cmoore@jeffco.us.

For more on these and other cold cases, please visit our Web site at www.jeffcosheriff.com. Scroll to the bottom of the page and look for the "Cold Case Files" link.



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The Truth About Traffic Accidents

by Sheriff Ted Mink

The Colorado State Patrol (CSP) collects data on the causes and locations of accidents in Jefferson County, as well as demographic information on the at-fault drivers. Here is a snapshot of traffic issues in unincorporated Jeffco over the last year, based on data collected by the State Patrol.

Causes

Common causes of accidents are lane violations, excessive speed, following too close and animal interference. However, the most common cause of accidents, accounting for one-third of all Jeffco crashes, is *inattentive driving*. We urge motorists to stay focused on the roadway when behind the wheel.

Age and Gender

Some demographic groups get a bad rap for the way they drive. Here is some information to help separate fact from fiction. According to CSP statistics, male drivers caused more accidents than female drivers over the last year, in every age category. Also, all ages from teens to senior citizens showed relatively equal numbers of crashes, with drivers aged 56 and over causing slightly fewer accidents than everyone else.

High Accident Areas

In the last year, there were 22 fatal accidents in unincorporated Jefferson County. Our Traffic Unit uses accident location statistics to determine which areas to saturate with extra patrols. Among the most problematic areas for accidents in the last year were Highway 285, Evergreen Parkway, the Bowles corridor and various locations on Wadsworth Boulevard.

Statistics show that Friday was the worst day for accidents. On weekdays, morning and evening rush hours show a higher number of accidents than other times of day, while on the weekends the lunch hour was the most dangerous.

Speeding

Speed is a factor in many traffic accidents. The Traffic Unit recently reported the top five locations to find motorists driving at excessive speeds. They are: Bowles Avenue at Oak; Highway 285 at Windy Point; the 8400 block of Highway 93; Wadsworth Boulevard at Columbine; and Highway 6 in Clear Creek Canyon, one mile west of tunnel two. As you can see, high speed areas and high accident areas are often one and the same.

Enforcement and Education

The Traffic Unit is comprised of six officers, usually on motorcycles, who focus solely on traffic enforcement and education. These deputies determine their areas of focus by studying accident location statistics, and by listening to citizen concerns shared via the KOPS hotline. The KOPS line, 303-271-KOPS (5677) allows citizens to notify the Sheriff's Office about problem traffic areas. Deputies spend a significant amount of patrol time working in problem areas identified by residents via the KOPS line. Traffic issues remain one of the most frequently cited concerns among residents contacting the Sheriff's Office.

Alive at 25

Alive at 25 is a joint venture between the Sheriff's Office and the Colorado State Patrol to get young drivers to adopt safe driving practices, take responsibility for their behavior and to be aware of many of the typical driving hazards. In 2006, Jefferson County deputies began teaching the courses in unincorporated Jefferson County high schools.

This summer, as part of the Alive at 25 program, teens are invited to "Take it to the Track" and race at Bandimere Speedway. The Take it to the Track program gives young people interested in racing a safe environment in which to do so. We encourage safe racing at Bandimere in place of unsafe street racing. Sheriff's Office deputies will be at Bandimere several times this summer to give teens some friendly competition.



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Sheriff's Office joins forces with area Realtors

by Sheriff Ted Mink

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office has joined forces with real estate agents working in Jefferson County neighborhoods, in an effort to make neighborhoods safer. This partnership, called Realtor Watch, can help prevent and solve crime in our communities while enhancing our residents' quality of life.

Why Realtor Watch?

Because Realtors spend a great deal of time in our neighborhoods, they are in a perfect position to notice suspicious or criminal activity in or around the homes they visit. The Realtor Watch program is designed to teach realtors crime prevention and proper crime reporting techniques to get them involved in protecting property, possessions ... and themselves.

The Facts

A safer community will increase the overall quality of life in any neighborhood. Reducing vandalism, burglary, criminal mischief, assault and other crimes in any area can make properties more valuable and more marketable.

Law enforcement agencies cannot be everywhere, all the time. We rely on assistance from the public to help solve crimes. The real estate industry, with its vast manpower resources and its activity in residential neighborhoods, can provide extra eyes and ears to protect our communities.

Studies have shown that crime prevention is most effective when stakeholders other than law enforcement are actively involved. Most neighborhood crime in Jefferson County is opportunistic and can be effectively reduced through simple crime prevention techniques.

How Realtor Watch Works

Sheriff's Office instructors train real estate agents in how to recognize and report suspicious activity, how to identify evidence of illegal drugs and meth labs, and how to avoid dangerous situations. Once trained, agents return to work, always keeping an eye open for suspicious activity in the neighborhoods where they work. Participants in Realtor Watch will receive e-mails from the Sheriff's Office with crime prevention tips, personal safety tips, crime trends and crime notifications.

Who Benefits?

The Realtor Watch program is a win-win situation for all.

Realtors benefit in several ways. First, it is much easier to sell a home, business or property if the area has a low incidence of crime. Further, agents will learn personal safety tips and gain a better understanding of crime in neighborhoods -- information that will help them in the course of their work.

Homeowners can gain peace of mind knowing that trained eyes are keeping watch on their listed home. Neighbors throughout the community will also benefit. Because chances are, if crime is occurring to your listed home, it may be affecting surrounding homes as well. Realtor Watch decals in listed homes' windows and on yard signs will let the neighbors know that a Realtor Watch agent is selling a home.

The Sheriff's Office benefits through the added eyes and ears that agents bring to our communities. Having a force of trained observers in our neighborhoods will help us to fight crime and make Jefferson County safer.

If you are interested in learning more about Realtor Watch or its counterpart, Neighborhood Watch, please contact a crime prevention deputy at 303-271-5363 (north Jeffco/mountains) or 720-377-2002 (south Jeffco).



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Back to School with Safe2Tell

by Sheriff Ted Mink

In 2005, the Sheriff's Office partnered with the Colorado Office of the Attorney General to bring the Safe2Tell program to our schools. Safe2Tell, part of Colorado Crime Stoppers, provides a safe and easy way for students to report information about anything that is a concern to school or community safety. Kids know long before adults what's going on in their schools; this program can aid school staff and law enforcement officers in preventing crime and getting help for students who may need it.

Safe2Tell was developed by The Colorado Trust to break the code of silence in schools. Fear of retaliation and peer pressure can often deter students from speaking out about problems in their schools. The Safe2Tell program allows students the option of anonymity. There is no caller ID on the Safe2Tell lines, and callers do not have to give their name, phone number or any identifying information if they choose not to.

Reasons to Call

Students can call for many different reasons, including: alcohol abuse; animal cruelty, assault, bullying, child abuse, domestic violence, drugs, explosives, fighting, fire starting, gangs, graffiti, guns, harassment, hate crimes, knives, planned fights, sexual abuse, stealing, suicide threats, suspicious activity, taunting, threats, unsafe situations and vandalism.

Safe2Tell is also available for use by teachers, parents, and students' families – anyone who needs to report a concern but wants to remain anonymous.

How to Call

To use Safe2Tell, dial the toll-free hotline: **1-877-542-7233**. Trained communications specialists answer Safe2Tell calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The caller does not have to provide his or her name; instead, he or she will be assigned a code number. Each tip is documented and assigned to the appropriate school officials, law enforcement agency, or both. Each tip is tracked and monitored.

Rollout

During the 2005-2006 school year, the program was introduced to students in several middle schools and one high school in unincorporated Jefferson County. The Sheriff's Office hopes that by the end of this school year, all students in unincorporated schools will have had assemblies on Safe2Tell to familiarize them with the program. We are working with principals to schedule these important gatherings.

Whether or not a student has had instruction on the Safe2Tell program, all are welcome and encouraged to use the hotline whenever they think it might help. As your children return to school this fall, talk to them about Safe2Tell and reasons why they might use it. Having a safe and anonymous method for reporting serious concerns can help us all make our schools safer. For more information, visit www.safe2tell.org.

ATTENTION – NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH CAN HELP YOU PREVENT CRIME IN YOUR AREA – ATTENTION



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IS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD READY TO RESIST CRIME, OR IS IT A TARGET FOR BURGLARS?



IT'S UP TO YOU!!

Chances are good that a home burglarized today is located in a neighborhood where one vital prevention tool is missing: an active **Neighborhood Watch** group. This community-based organization of citizens working together with law enforcement has become the key to preventing burglary and crime nationwide.

Throughout the United States, dramatic decreases in burglary and related offenses are reported by law enforcement professionals in communities with active **Neighborhood Watch** programs. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office wants to work with you and your neighbors to start a **Neighborhood Watch** program in your area.

Please contact your **Crime Prevention Deputy** for more information on how we can help you start this important crime prevention program.

North/Mountains (303) 271-5363

South (720) 377-2002

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS AND HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

Please be alert for any suspicious activity, and report any unusual incidents, vehicles, or persons to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office at (303) 277-0211. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 and be prepared to provide the location of the emergency.

ATTENTION – NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH CAN HELP YOU PREVENT CRIME IN YOUR AREA – ATTENTION



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Understanding Motorized Bicycles and Toy Vehicles

Colorado law (CRS 42-2-103) says that to operate a motorized bicycle, you must have a driver's license. *Driving a motorized bicycle is no different than driving any regular vehicle on the road*, and normal traffic laws must be followed, including registering the vehicle (CRS 42-4-109).

- According to Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS), a "motorized bicycle" has two or three wheels, an engine not exceeding 50cc, and an automatic transmission producing a maximum speed of 30 miles per hour. It also has a headlamp on the front, a red reflector or lamp on the rear, a bell or audible warning device, and a permanent and attached seat. If your scooter has all of these features, then it's most likely considered a motorized bicycle. Failure to obey traffic laws may result in a ticket/fine.
- Most of the other scooters you see for sale are considered "toy vehicles" due to their lack of a fixed seat, headlamp, etc.
- A "neighborhood electric vehicle" is a self-propelled, electrically powered motor vehicle with a top speed of 25 miles per hour. Depending on their equipment, they can be either motorized bicycles or toy vehicles.

Motorized Bicycles:



"Toy vehicles" whether they are gas or electric can only be legally operated on private property, with the owner's permission. Operating them on public streets, roadways, or sidewalks can result in a ticket/fine. Plus, a parent or guardian who knowingly lets his or her children operate a toy vehicle on public streets runs the risk of receiving an additional ticket/fine.

Toy Vehicles:



Operating toy vehicles on private property is just fine. If you're seeking an alternative, ask permission of private property owners, such as churches or businesses with empty lots.

If you have any other questions or concerns about motorized bicycles or toy vehicles, please contact the Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit at:

North/Mountains – 303-271-5363

South – 720-377-2002

Please be alert for any suspicious activity, and report any unusual incidents, vehicles, or persons to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office at (303) 277-0211. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 and be prepared to provide the location of the emergency.