

*****Farmer's and Property Owners Safety Alert*****

In the spring, people start to return to their properties in the rural areas. You may find that it has been vandalized, burglarized, or other natural forces have caused damage. Especially now with Covid-19 pandemic people are staying home and may not be checking properties like they have in the past. Please remain vigilant about checking on your properties while social distancing.

Here is some proactive advice for how to best protect your belongings and property from unwanted intruders while your property is vacant.

- 1) The best defense for your property is cameras. There are many versions out there that can be overwhelming. **Any camera is better than no camera.** Placing signs stating the property is under video surveillance will help deter trespassers on your property.
 - a. There are cameras that are on a pricier side that are stationary and can link up through cell phones and Wi-Fi that will notify you by phone when someone or movement is detected on your property within range of the camera. There are systems out there that require power and will record to a DVR system located within the property. Most DVR systems need to be checked regularly as the video retention is anywhere from a few days to a few weeks and can start over writing/stop recording depending on your settings. If an intruder gets in and takes your DVR system the purpose of the camera is defeated.
 - b. Another option is buying a trail camera. It is recommended if going with a trail camera option to get a camera that has no visible flash and you would need to conceal the location of this camera on the property.
 - c. There are fake cameras out there that can also serve as a deterrent or a decoy. These will not allow imaging for evidence.
- 2) **Securing your property.** The first step is placing "NO TRESPASSING" signs at the entrance of the property. Securely locking doors and windows with deadbolts if possible. Older wooden doors are not always lock proof. It is a good idea to barricade these doors or use barricade bars. Windows and doors that are not visible from the road could be a target; Placing heavy furniture/objects in front of those doors before leaving the property for the winter months could help deter vandals.
- 3) **Knowing what property is there.** The best thing you can do is take inventory of items on your property. A simple easy way to do this is pull

out your camera and take a video of your entire property, indoor and outdoor. This will allow Law Enforcement to enter these numbers into the national database as stolen and easily identifiable. Some items, like jewelry, old silver, antiques, may not have serial numbers. Take photos of these items including identifiable marks that would show their value. An inventory of items of value that have serial numbers should be written down and photographed.

This will also be extremely beneficial to your insurance company if filing a claim.

4) Try to have someone check on the property at least every two weeks.

In the winter/spring time especially, evidence like foot prints, tire treads, and finger prints can degrade in the elements. The value of having those items as evidence, even if your case is not solved can be invaluable to the investigator. This evidence can be entered into a database to compare to future thefts, (weeks or years down the line) with those same identifiers and may lead to a suspect or return of items.

5) Do not leave buildings unlocked or keys in vehicles.

Taking these steps will not ensure that your property won't become a target for these crimes, but it can create a deterrent and a defense for your property.

**Even if your property appears to have been unharmed, please inform law enforcement so evidence maybe collected to pursue charges if a suspect is found.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact: ***Deputy Danielle Bjorlie, Lead Investigator Nelson County Sheriff's Department:***
701-247-2474

