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## **N e w s      R e l e a s e**

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### **Sheriff Champagne cautions, "Burglar-proof your home before holiday travel"**

Are you one of the millions of Americans who will make holiday travel part of your Christmas plans? Well, if you are, you should remember that securing your home for holiday travel should be part of your overall plans. Have you considered how safe and secure your home is while you travel? Well, not as safe as it could be, warned Sheriff Champagne, especially if you do not tend to some simple precautions prior to leaving home.

"Property crimes are the most reported crimes in the country," according to Sheriff Champagne. "And Christmas is a time when house burglars go into overtime looking for easy opportunities and unwitting victims," the Sheriff continued. "So it is all the more important that everyone pays particular attention to securing their homes while they travel during the holiday season." How can you reduce your risk of becoming a victim of burglary or theft during the holidays and throughout the year?

Sheriff Champagne has some practical suggestions for you to help secure your home.

- Do not advertise your departure.
- Keep a parked car in your driveway.
- Set your lights and television on a timer.
- Have your newspaper stopped or ask a trusted neighbor or friend to pick up your paper and other mail while you are away.
- Do not state on your answering machine that you are away. If you do not have a machine, take your phone off the hook or turn the ringer on low so people do not hear your phone endlessly ringing.
- Try to be discreet when packing your luggage.
- Keep your blinds in their normal position - - a sudden change is an announcement that your home is unoccupied.
- Make arrangements to have your yard maintained if you are going to be away for a while.
- Avoid putting your name on anything that can be viewed from the street. A visible name could aid a burglar in casing your home, as they can use your last name and address to look up your phone number. They can then call your home to see if anybody is at home.
- Activate your home alarm, if you have one.

Sheriff Champagne concluded, "Don't forget, Crime is not something that always happens to the other guy; it can happen to any of us. So, it is up to all of us to do everything we can to safeguard ourselves as much as possible, not just during the holidays, but all year long. From all of us at the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office, have a happy and safe holiday."